WORK-A-DAY THOUGHTS

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IRENE OWEN ANDREWS

Irene Owen Andrews
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WORK-A-DAY THOUGHTS.

Work-a-Day Thoughts.

BY

ALEXANDER CARGILL.

'Sir, I am a true labourer: I earn that I get, get that I wear; owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness; glad of other men's good, content with my harm,—'

As You Like It.

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'We are but toilers—in whate'er estate,
Weaving our various fabrics well or ill.
Some are who ply with happy-handed skill
The deft, swift shuttle, and who ne'er abate
Th' appointed task, but strive to emulate
Some fair design which the controlling Will
Hath giv'n them forth to pattern and fulfil.
But there are others who, disconsolate,
Their textures weave with foolish fears and sighs,—
Like thriftless, thankless craftsmen who deride
Their labour, with its hire dissatisfied,—
While to and fro Time's subtle shuttle flies.
O men, O toilers, let us blithesome be,
And weave brave garments for Eternity!'

ANONYMOUS.

OLD SERVANTS.

OLD servants are of more account than new masters. Hats off to old servants. Their worthiness is assuredly approved, as a precious metal, by that great assayer of all that is human and perishable—Time, whose test is withal strict, impartial, infallible! Old servants deserve to be reckoned as old friends—true, tried, and trusty: as such they may be reckoned upon. Let us think ever regardfully of old servants; showing them new courtesies, doing them fresh kindnesses, without offence or hurt to their consciousness. Do we not hear sometimes of masters discarding and disowning their old servants as they do their worn-out garments or their used-up horses and dogs? Alas for such

old servants! shame, black shame upon such masters! Who would not, in that case, rather a thousand times be the old servants turned adrift, 'lame and impotent' and unrequited, yet with all their sterling worthiness still vital within their breasts, than the masters, void and bankrupt of the same? Hats off, I say—hats off to old servants; for, depend upon it, while thus behaving with due and deserved courtesy towards them, we likewise do honour to ourselves in appreciating and acknowledging their obvious virtues, tested by long years of service, to which their description gives them claim and warrant.

A more powerful or pathetic delineation of heroic human character, albeit in a humble aspect, was never drawn than that of Adam in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*—the old and faithful servant of Sir Rowland de Bois, and, latterly, of his cruel and unscrupulous son Oliver. Probably a finer example, or one truer to nature, of an old and tried servant

was never portrayed in fiction, or, indeed, encountered in real life than this Adam, with whose original Shakespeare, we may be sure, had foregathered at some time in his experience of the world of humanity. Interest in this particular character is made all the more enthralling by the fact that it is actually on record that the great dramatist-actor himself essayed the part of old Adam when his splendid sylvan play was first represented on the stage of the Globe Theatre about 1609. That Shakespeare himself thought much of the character may therefore be very well assumed from the fact that he—whether from an actor's choice or necessity, it matters but little—played the part of the faithful servant, and, if tradition is to be trusted, played it right well too. It is, however, with the type of beautiful and admirable character so well bodied forth by Shakespeare in the humble and self-sacrificing servitor of *As You Like It*, that we have pre-

sently to do; a type of human character which, it may be unhesitatingly said, never dies. For, of course, Shakespeare drew Adam from the life—the life of the times in which he, a shrewd, busy, and observant man of the world, lived and moved among his fellow-men; and if there were faithful old Adams then, as we may be sure there were before Shakespeare's time, there can be no question that his type is still extant, living and moving in the flesh, and ready, if necessary, and when hard-hearted and ungenerous masters like Oliver de Bois requite them with such a term of reproach as 'Old dog!' to exclaim, 'Is "old dog" my reward? Alas, most true; for I have lost my teeth in your service!' Let us hope, however, such ingratitude falls to the lot of but few of such old servants, whether they be Adams or Eves.

A few observations on this class of persons may therefore not be unacceptable. And when we speak of

'old servants,' applying the term generally to such persons who have spent the best part of their lives in perhaps the self-same service, but particularly to those of them who have thereby come to be regarded as one of the household, on the footing as much of a friend as of a servant, what a host of excellent traits of character, delightful to ponder, at once suggest themselves to the mind! The very term or phrase itself has, as it were, a kind of pathos about it that at once appeals to and quickens our soberer thoughts and finer feelings. For assuredly an old servant means, if anything at all, a tried and trusty servant; one who has set his life toward and centred, so to speak, its humble but, nevertheless, noble effort in the employment of a particular master or household; one to whom the rewards of his services, while perhaps substantially requiting to the servant, are intrinsically not of such value to himself as the fact, the feeling, that it is the

delight and ambition of his life to render such services with that patient, unfaltering faithfulness and devoted affection which haply he thinks but little of, but which are, notwithstanding, treasures of true excellence to the master who wisely so regards them, as well indeed he may!

Who has not had some experience of these worthy people—of their odd idiosyncrasies; of their amusing and delightful eccentricities; of their fanciful foibles, begot of long-continued habit or custom, or age?—all as may be observed in one way or another in the performance of their duties, or in their bearing towards the heads of the household where their length and faithfulness of service have bred in them a kind of familiarity which, within proper limits, is only right and natural. This familiarity not unfrequently exhibits its amusing and humorous aspect, as the following story, for instance, will show: Sir John B——, a once well-known

Fifeshire laird, had in his establishment a very old and true servant in the person of Watty Wilson, the butler. It was the frequent habit of Sir John to invite some of his neighbours and tenants to partake of his well-known hospitality. On these, generally convivial, occasions, Watty, by reason of his office, was of course always 'in full feather,' and, like not a few of his class, noted closely all that happened. Once when the party was composed mostly of ladies, Watty observed that his master had, in the course of the evening, drunk wine—this was a generation ago—with every lady assembled, with the exception of one particular lady, who wore a green dress. This omission or neglect on the part of the host did not escape the keen, shrewd eyes of the butler, who fidgeted about the room a long time before he could get an opportunity of reminding his master of the fact of the omission. At length he did get an opportunity of doing so, and, slipping up with decanter

in hand behind the chair where sat Sir John regaling himself, whispered behind his back, by way of an aside, '*What ails ye, man, at her wi' the green goon?*'

The familiarity here between master and servant is delightful to imagine. It is to be feared, however, such would scarcely be tolerated in these days, when even old servants are, very many of them, denied by the exigencies of our modern life that quiet, easy-going, comfortable, do-as-you-please sociability with their masters which a former generation enjoyed. The faithfulness of some old servants is sometimes very touching, and exhibits human nature in a noble and beautiful aspect. Many and many a story could be related of their heroic fidelity in times of disaster to those whom they have served in brighter and better days; still rendering the same attentiveness in service, only doing it a little more tenderly, and, if possible, a little more respectfully;

giving actually of their own savings, long and patiently put by, to help over the trouble, and to lighten the new and unexpected burden that, like a load, depresses the household. Not a few of our best story-writers and novelists, as the reader will recollect, have indeed found, as Shakespeare found in 'Adam,' splendid examples of human character in these humble individuals; found in them a perfect mine of the brightest ore, rich, beautiful and admirable. For there is rarely anything cheap or flimsy or unsubstantial in the character of an old servant; the worth of his or her services the world—that exacting taskmaster—may appraise only at so many pounds sterling; but the value of the character which, generally speaking, is ennobled, beautified, and refined through long years of patient and unostentatious, faithful service, is not for a moment to be weighed in the same balance, though the scales thereof were of the most sterling gold!

THE BENEFITS OF A BUSY LIFE.

BUSY men are, as a rule, virtuous men, living upright, well-employed, anxious maybe, but on the whole well-ordered, virtuous lives. Not having the time to spare for it, they seek not, desire not, find not the time to pander to habits that incline viciously. Thus it follows 'as the night the day' their chances of living a long and healthy life are increased a thousandfold. This truth is as old as the hills; yet men are ever to be found who are wilfully blind to its existence. As many prefer to listen to the voice of the physician rather than to the voice of another, hear what one of the greatest continental physicians of modern times says on this very point. A busy man himself, as most physicians are, Hufeland spoke from experience, the stern and matter-of-fact experience of an anxious and distracting life of hard and serious work:

'Length of days can only be secured

and enjoyed by leading a virtuous, *busy life*. I can at any rate assert that men will in vain seek for the one without the other; and that physical and moral health are as nearly related as the body and soul. They flow from the same sources, become blended together, and when united, the result is human nature ennobled and raised to perfection.'

THE PITH AND MARROW OF A LIFE.

WORK, *i.e.* occupation, is the very *pith* and *marrow* of a happy, healthy life. It is more. Just what the spine or backbone is to the human frame, so is work the mainstay and support to the character and life, in their true sense, of a man. Injure the one and, in all likelihood, paralysis will ensue: where the other is a minus quantity, then a state of moral paralysis is evermore incipient, while the subject becomes fit for nothing, and sooner or later sinks into a condition hopelessly, pitifully moribund.

God help him! But for a man with 'splendid purpose in his eyes,' although it be only set towards the earning of a day's honest wage, or in heartily doing a brotherly act towards a needy one, the chances are vastly in his favour that there is some soundness in him which enables him to plant his foot like a man, firmly and joyfully, on this ever-beautiful planet where God has placed him for a season.

A JEREMIAD.

HAD that saying of old which declared that 'man was born to trouble as the sparks fly upward' been otherwise translated—that, for instance, he was born to work, or even to labour—doubtless the millennium would be palpably nearer at hand than it is, in spite of manifold prophets, at this present-passing moment. For assuredly an unreckonable, nay, an unreasonable amount of mischief has been done to the progress

and well-being of mankind since this doleful jeremiad was first uttered. Even at this day the saying, having, as it were, the sanction and authority of inspiration to endorse its *bona fides*, is as a spoke in the wheel of the car of human advancement which, while thereby the car is made to drag along the highway of Time with harsh and fretting dissonance, affords to freights of grumbling human souls the very best pretext to be idle and mournful, and even often by consequence mischief-doing.

Man was made not to mourn, but initially and finally to fill a nobler inheritance — to work, to imitate the Great Worker who made him, body and soul. To this end, in truth, was his being created, just as sure as that the sun was made to give forth light and heat and life. Man's chief end is unquestionably to glorify God here and to enjoy His Fellowship hereafter; but work, his daily work, his life-work, is the present, at-hand and palpable

medium whereby this can be done. To glorify God! How otherwise can mortals nowadays do this? Not surely by fasting and feasting; not merely in persistent and assiduous attention to the performance of orthodox ordinances after a fashionable routine; but chiefly by doing one's part in the world's work manfully, and not idly or deceitfully, or to the hurt or detriment of a single soul in it. This duty is expected of every man and woman endowed with adequate capacity, whether born in the humblest or loftiest walks of life; God expects each thus to fulfil his or her part, whether as a servant or as one who is served.

In the wilful nonfulfilment of this legitimate part in and purpose of the work of life, perhaps the most terrible Nemesis that can overtake men or women this side of Time is the wretchedness of that condition which provokes them to groan, 'We are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward!'

A HAPPY-HEARTED SONG.

A HAPPY heart will ever make a load feel lightsome to the back,—a physical as well as a moral truism that only stands to reason. What a delight it is to meet with happy-hearted people, or even to read of them! Of the many knaves, clowns, fools, rogues *et hoc genus omne* drawn by Shakespeare's master-pen, Autolycus has, somehow, hit my fancy most. Jacques may be finely sentimental, but he is apt to become a trifle tedious, and give one a sense of weariness of his wise saws. The fool in *Lear* flashes here and there a fearful, bewildering and pathetic creature; but one is relieved to learn that he is no more, and that his 'all-licensed' lips are at length dumb (how tragically dumb!) in death. Of course there is no possible comparison between Jacques and Lear's poor fool, or between either of them

and the incomparable 'snapper-up of inconsiderate trifles' of that grand drama—the *Winter's Tale.* But while one experiences a sense of positive relief in parting company with wise Jacques and Lear's witty, pitiful fool, one is loth indeed to 'jog on the footpath way' without a little longer enjoying the merry companionship of Autolycus, even, moreover, while submitting one's self — within certain limits, of course — to the fellow's trickstering! But he has his wares to sell, and so on to the fair he must trundle, trolling to himself the while:

> 'Jog on, jog on the footpath way,
> And merrily hent the stile—a;
> A merry heart goes all the day,
> Your sad tires in a mile—a!'

A very pearl of a snatch is this: though uttered by the mouth of a rogue of a pedlar, the wisest man extant would be all the wiser—aye, and the happier—were he to sing it to himself a dozen times a day. It is worth a bushel of

sermons and philosophies, for it is—and, depend upon it, Shakespeare so meant it—as happy-inspiring as any human thing of sense or sound can be. Bravo, Autolycus!

A SOLID WORKER.

An ounce of Science is in these working days of ours worth bushels of Literature (so called). That is to say, the geologist with hammer in hand among the rocks; the physicist in his laboratory amid his drugs and chemicals; the naturalist exploring far afield for some tiny plant or floweret that, when discovered, yields as much delight to his heart as that experienced by the sky-spying astronomer when some new planet swims into his ken,—each does a more lasting and *substantial* service, not only to his own day and generation but likewise to posterity, than the man who spins his mere cobweb fancies and fictions which, vastly more often

than otherwise, serve but to ensnare the vagabond minds of the indolent.

The man of science is to-day assuredly the solidest worker in the world. And although by searching he may not—aye, he never can find out the Almighty God, yet he works more and *dares further* than any other mortal to interpret what he can of the all-enveloping mystery. He *explores*, not *implores*, for a revelation of the great Original One.

THE VALUE TO MANKIND OF THE SOLID WORKER.

To the world at large, men of science are exactly and emphatically what the sappers and miners are to an army of conquest. They are, so to speak, the pioneers who bridge, who make and direct the way whereon and whereby to move forward; more indispensable, initially, than almost the commander himself. For while it is his to indicate, direct and control the movement of his

battalions, what if there be no way-going prepared? Well, they may but spread out their tents and bivouac, they may smoke the pipe of peace or dance to the tabor or pibroch—but no marching on to battle and, maybe, victory. But with the roaring torrent safely bridged and the mountainous ways made certain and footable, to what heights may they not attain! So with our mathematicians, our astronomers, our chemists, our geologists; *they have to do with the very heart and soul of things;* to handle the forces and mainsprings of this vast, solid universe, on a point of which we live, move and substantially have our being; and we do well to follow in their rear. For the rest of us, the millioned multitudes, the world only wags in a way; shows and goes like a great stupendous clock, on whose dial there are but two omnipresent facts ever staring at and confronting us: meridian—midnight; life—death. Of these our philosophers

reason and our poets sing, while, too, our preachers make a great to-do of the mystery wherein we are involved, and people say how wise, how good are such men. But, excelsior! our working-men of science dream nothing, sing nothing, prate of nothing, mystify nothing. They simply, honestly, deal in the all-compact wares of everlasting Truth which throng about them in the star-systems above, in the mountainous places around, and in the sea-depths beneath.

DARWIN AND SHAKESPEARE.

How great, how splendid was the genius of such a man as Darwin; how much is there in such a man's life-work to admire and love, as one admires and loves the work of master-minds like Shakespeare, or Plato, or Bacon; souls who in a certain sense saw through the substance of things unseen to the eyes of common mortals. Yet mighty as

was Shakespeare's imaginative sweep, gigantic as was his mental stature, which, striding over other minds with the step of a Colossus, enabled him to peer with more commanding eye abroad into the great world of nature, and so to note more of and about its wonders and mysteries, Darwin goes straight *to* them and quietly tells us their why and their wherefore. Shakespeare says gloriously, indeed, like the very king of poets, standing, as it were, apart on some heaven-kissing hill or pinnacle, or point of vantage not of this earth:

> 'The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, this great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind."

Darwin, to use a homely figure, puts his finger pensively on the pulse, and tells us how beats within the great universal heart of things; how flow the life-currents that feed and foster it: aye, and would even indicate to us the very Fountain-Head and Life-Spring Himself!

ACCOMPLISHMENT OF WORK IN A SHORT LIFETIME.

ALL history, more or less, is eloquent with the great achievements of men who, humanly speaking, lived but 'a crowded hour of glorious life.'

To come to modern times, there are many examples to be met with in every field of thought and action where men have achieved results of vast and beneficent good to mankind in a comparatively brief lifetime.

In literature, for example, think how Burns moved the heart of the people to tears with the tenderness of his song, and left them mourning for him ere his thirty-seventh year! What a toiler was he in Life's great task, and yet how manfully—some unpardonable parentheses notwithstanding—he performed his part, although the end of it, Heaven knows, was sad and pitiful enough. Still, in the few years allotted

to him, he comprised a miracle of noble work, whose power and influence can never fail. Byron, too, died at this age—the fateful age of thirty-seven—having accomplished much that will assuredly live while the English language is extant. Shakespeare died in his fifty-second year—life's prime with most men—and left the world a priceless treasury of thought of the very highest value. When one ponders the vast amount of work, work of the noblest, royallest character, accomplished by the brain of this wonderful man, and that ere he was fifty-two years of age—a period of life when many men nowadays esteem themselves but young—one is amazed, awed almost, in contemplating the mental force that glowed within the physical framework of this paramount poet. Nor ought the limit of our admiration to stop here. For it should, moreover, be remembered that the average duration of a human life is computed at about forty-five years.

Well, if there be deducted from this fifteen years for sleep and rest, and fifteen more for recreation, how little there seems to be left in which his work was *actually* done! Therefore, in this regard, how busy and prolific must Shakespeare's brain-power have been in the short space of life allotted to him, keeping in view the age at which he began to write, and the age at which he died—a period of but thirty years. Applying the foregoing gauge as to the period of human life possible for activity, there can hardly be any questioning the fact, to which, indeed, the many writings that bear his name afford the most direct and palpable evidence, that the man whom the world knows as Shakespeare, for the *quality* and *quantity* of his life-work, towers head and shoulders above all other writers, and is probably, when due regard is paid to his brief career, the most extraordinary man the world has seen since the dawn of the Christian era.

SHAKESPEARE'S MULTITUDINOUSNESS.

THE mind of Shakespeare, as revealed in the body of writings which bear his name, rightly constituting it the proudest and best-known in European literature, may, humanly speaking, be described as one of the greatest intellectual marvels men have ever contemplated.

No author before, and assuredly no writer since Shakespeare, ever approximated to him in that multitudinousness of original power and force of thought and expression, which is, perhaps, the most striking feature his mind exhibits. The effort and scope of his gigantic genius essayed to cope with and, as it were, circumvent the world—we might almost say, without undue exaggeration, the universe of man and of nature. Has not the miraculous work of this one man—burdened, too, as he was with our common, everyday, flesh-and-blood frailties—never, think you,

made many a sceptic mind waver and pause in its doubting the existence of a divine Creator?

For after all,

> 'What a piece of work is man!
> How admirable,' etc., etc.

* * * *

SOCIAL BANDITTI.

It is often remarked, and sometimes, indeed, with not a little pathos, that 'one-half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives;' a truism which, however trite, will be found on a little reflection to embody much that is, in a social sense at any rate, of the saddest and sternest significance. True, the saying itself may be as old as the hills, and, in its common application, as bald as their tops in winter; and, for that matter, may have originated in and served a time or object with which the world of to-day may not have, in this especial regard, the slightest feeling of

sympathy. Still, its triteness, like that of not a few other popular sayings of the kind, has unfortunately helped to obscure, or rather to minimize, the significance or value of the truth it seeks to set forth; and therefore when one hears the expression one is inclined to consider it, for the most part, a pithless and marrowless saying, without that force or point whose function it is ever to send home, straight as an arrow to its mark, some feeling for the heart or meaning to the mind. Be that as it may, however, the saying above quoted expresses, on the very face of it, a truth of broad and deep significance; and although it does not, in all human probability, occur to the one-half of the world that it is, or should be, its especial business to bother itself about the 'other half' and how it manages to get along, the fact is none the less patent and palpable on that account that, as is suggested by our proverb, these two great orthodox

divisions of mankind continue to exist in a state of mutual ignorance or indifference, each of the other's well or ill being.

But assuredly, in whatever sense apprehended, this truism could not be more appropriate or applicable than when considered with regard to our present subject. For, the vast number of persons who live, banditti-like, surreptitiously, on the ignorance, credulity, or feeling of their fellows, it would amaze anyone to know, were that possible. Of course, it would be the height of absurdity, as it would unquestionably be most untruthful, to reckon their number as the 'one-half of the world' whose way of life the other half may never adequately comprehend. And, for the sake of our common humanity, let us hope their number never did and never can, in all conscience, approach to anything like this proportion. Still, the truth must not be blinked or 'bogled' at—the truth that a very

large percentage of the people live and, what is more, thrive by prey; that is, they exist, they multiply by illegal and illegitimate means, and so palpably fail to fulfil their part in the world and its work; in a word, fail to do that 'duty' which everyone born into the world with the requisite capacity and opportunity is rightly expected to do, at least to the utmost of his or her ability. It cannot, therefore, be considered unfair to apply to such persons the designation at the head of this paper; for such persons may surely be not inaptly termed 'Social Banditti,' who, although they may not find it convenient to conceal themselves from a violated law in inaccessible mountainous places, nor yet wear

'A swashing and a martial outside,'

nor lop off ears, nor even cut throats, nevertheless live and thrive by robbing their neighbours of their money, whether within the magic circle of the

racecourse, or by the doleful medium of begging-letters, or by the help of those charmful, never-failing appeals to Christian charity and pity, or by any other unrighteous means to that self-same end.

To give in general terms the meaning of the phrase 'Social Banditti,' we should say that, keeping in view its foregoing application, all those persons may be aptly designated as such who, possessing the natural strength *to work*, and by its employment might be enabled to live by their own resources, have at the same time *an inborn antipathy against doing it*, and so are inclined to adopt such unlawful methods as will enable them to live in comparative idleness and wantonness.

Few amongst them are led to become social banditti from causes or from circumstances other than those that arise from their initial desire *to avoid work*. In some instances, it may be, the motive principle is to accu-

mulate gain; but by far the larger proportion of our banditti take to the social highway more from the desire to escape work and evade something of its 'tyranny,' as they reckon it, than for anything else. And until men and women are taught, and that early, to believe in the grand gospel of work, and how by its means, though not by its means alone, they may become vastly more humanized and ennobled in this great work-a-day world, and so enabled to add, although even in an infinitesimal degree, something to its beauty, and something more to its happiness, the race of social banditti will never become extinct, but, rather, will more and more multiply and abound. It is beyond the power, as it certainly exceeds the function, of what is called the census or enumeration of the people to give any adequate idea of the numbers of those individuals whom we have taken the liberty to describe by such a term of reproach as social banditti.

How many there are in the world—for every country contains them, parasites indigenous to every land—no one knows; but it may fearlessly be said that they were never more numerous than at the present day; and nowhere do they thrive and fatten better than in our own country, where the general conditions of society are such as constitute it a perfect paradise for the social bandit in which to live, move, and, in the most substantial sense, enjoy his being. Our scope of review, however, need not extend beyond the limits of Great Britain; and even if that be too broad a range, no reader need look beyond the boundary of his own city or town, or, for that matter, further away than the near line of demarcation that separates his own village from that which is adjacent. For (we speak here of all kinds of social banditti) they are everywhere; thronging the market-places, crowding our streets, and even finding a refuge within the walls of

sacred places. Assuredly there is no more ubiquitous mortal extant at this moment than the social bandit.

Just as in every other class of persons existing in so-called civilized communities there are varying grades and conditions, so with the body politic of our social banditti; there is the rank-and-file order of the regiment, from the young and green recruit of yesterday, yet but rawly equipped, to the old and tried veteran who has drawn blood in a score of fields, and yet is still to the fore! And a motley lot of braves they are! Let us look at some of them; and as we do so no feature or characteristic of the crowd attracts the attention so readily as the comparative *youthfulness* of its *personnel*. The most striking feature this, it is at the same time that which excites the most interest and the deepest commiseration in the mind and heart of the observer. Of the middle-aged and aged there are enough, surely, and to spare; but what

a wanton waste of youth, energy and talent is here in this crowd of young men—strong fellows for the most part, daintily dressed some of them, but well and respectably dressed all—who seem, at the moment we pass them, to be deeply in earnest and 'at one' about something, whatever the subject. 'Banditti' they? Aye, indeed! Listen, if you may, for a little to their conversation, and you will find that their talk has proclaimed them social banditti—out-and-out, irrefragable, incorrigible. To-morrow's race is their topic; and they seem to wag wise tongues and shake grave heads, and—aye, there's the rub!—a score of pockets will be lighter on the morrow, a score of hearts heavier, but not theirs. Why? how? 'They are betting men; and, having nothing else to do, they live at somebody's expense, gloriously, goldenly!' Thus might the observer moralize as he notes this group of social banditti lounging at a corner of the street as

he passes meditatively by. But why moralize on them and their calling? They are themselves 'their own epitome;' and, as has been already said, their youthfulness is the mournfullest trait about them.

The number of young men, nowadays, whose only avocation in life seems to be to hang about street-corners, still tolerable in some towns and cities, or lounge about the bars of liquor-shops, tolerable everywhere, where they expect, confidentially, mind you, to pick up the 'straight tips' for to-morrow's race, is assuredly and alarmingly on the increase. Every city in the three kingdoms contains hundreds of such young fellows who would not, could not, do a day's honest work, at a reasonable wage, for their precious lives—not they! And why should they, forsooth, when they can live in clover from year to year by the mere frequenting of the race-course, where certain other unsophisticated fellows *will* come and part with

their money to them? In this regard, we consider what is called the betting evil or nuisance the most prolific cause or source of the existence of a very large proportion of our social banditti, and at the same time of that proportion of it which is to be regarded and thought of with the most serious apprehension and anxiety, seeing it embraces, and ever seems to tend to embrace in its fold, much of the youth, the energy, and, under other circumstances, the hope of our land. A pretty pass in the progress of our civilization we have come to in these miraculous modern days, when even the weight of a jockey becomes to thousands of our young men a fact of such significance that it must needs be flashed across a hundred wires to feed their greedy intelligence, to which it is a very crumb or grain of gold! Sad is it, surely (but perhaps it is all in the way of innocent fun and frolic!), to think that to many of what might otherwise be described as the

'flower of Britain's chivalry,' the 'going' mettle of some sporting lord's four-year-old colt should be the grandest fact extant! Yet it is so to them, *because it is the goldenest fact extant!* Why, they have already in a short season cleared as many pounds sterling by the mere magic of the beast's name and the prowess of its rider, as might enable a score of plodding preachers and their families to live in luxury for a year; and so, while the luck lasts, such a fact is, to them, meat and drink and everything besides. But somebody has to pay for it all, and they, the youthful banditti, are on that account none the less blithe and happy and eager for the morrow and its chances.

If the fact of the comparative youthfulness of this very large body of persons whose livelihood is obtained by such illegitimate means be a fact of grievous omen, it cannot be said to assume a less grievous aspect when it is declared that,

generally speaking, and, of course, gauged by everyday standards, it is, moreover, a very genteel and intelligent body. To impugn or even to doubt its gentility and intelligence would, indeed, almost amount to libel; no body could show a more respectable appearance, or boast of more of that knowingness which possesses so real and substantial a value, than that under consideration. It is, to tell the truth, because they are so respectable, having the highest in the land to vouch their credentials, and also because they are so very knowing, that they thrive as they do. So long as our turf-bandits, if we may so call them, are approved and patronized by those occupying the very highest social and political positions in the land; so long as the 'profession' is permitted, with slight restraints, to carry on in the very ante-chambers, so to speak, of the abodes of the wealthiest and worthiest, its demoralizing traffic in bargains of chance, which shall be

decided by the mere speed of an animal and the dexterity of its rider; just so long as these conditions are suffered—and they constitute a feature of the time which is becoming daily more pronounced and distinguishing — will society have to submit to the existence in its midst of a species of plague than which nothing could, morally speaking, be more infective and disastrous. Horse or any other description of racing may be all very well in itself; the excitement the same affords to a great number of persons being almost a *sine quâ non* of modern life. Indeed, a considerable amount of wholesome pleasure is undeniably to be derived from the witnessing of, or participation in, a race, whether between horses or youths. But for every single individual to whom the race affords, *per se*, that legitimate pleasure and excitement which should be its first and final object, there are scores to whom such a race would be the flattest and tamest thing ever invented, without that

stimulus or zest which such an imported element as that of gambling supplies. Take away this element of gambling, and in a race there would be nothing left but—the horses! It is this element that forms such an attaction to so many persons, who, of all classes and of all ages, never were more numerous than at present. For people well advanced in years to make this a means of existence is, to put it mildly, an unmanly thing to do, because it is so lazy; but when so many *young* men are thronging to the racecourse and endeavouring to live by its perilous chances, the matter certainly assumes a graver aspect both in a social and in an economical sense. That very many young men so live is a fact which cannot be gainsaid; constituting a social problem of deep and far-reaching significance, which, perhaps, after all, can best be solved by stringent legal methods—such methods or processes by which alone it may be enabled to clear our social highways and byways

of the great number of bandits infesting them, and by no class so plaguingly as that here indicated.

STRIKES.

THERE is something unspeakably sad and pathetic in that cry—so often heard on our highways—of the idle workman, 'Got no work to do!' To how many a domestic tragedy are these terrible words often but the prologue! An idle workman—what a picture! Nothing, surely, more melancholy and depressing to look upon than that in this living, moving, and breathing work-a-day world! Let us look at it for a moment. A pair of strong, ever-so-willing hands thrust moodily into empty pockets; great iron muscles relaxing actually for want of their customary work and exercise; eyes dull and languid, their wonted brightness lost, or, at all events, overshadowed; countenance hard, dogged, morose; pocket coinless—not so much

in it as could buy 'a bit of tobacco;' stomach breakfastless; everything about him, to the very shine of his shoes, dull, beclouded, sombre, and all, alas, for lack of work! A picture this, surely, capable of drawing a tear from the heart of the hardest of us; and yet, as we push and elbow our way along the streets of the city, we rub shoulders every hour of the day, and every day of the week, with scores of living embodiments of it, —men whom the merciless strike has thrown out of their yards and workshops to starve or to sin, to drift or to drown. But, unfortunately, that does not represent all the picture. That may be its main, its prominent feature, but there are yet the details to be observed. More's the pity that his is not the only figure we see. What of her, his wife, and the little ones at home? At home? Heavens, what an irony is, to-day, in the phrase! Home? Well, at least it is the place where they have dwelt for so long, so comfortably, and so happily,

until there came across the threshold that gaunt, dreaded shadow, Want—the wolf with the fierce, keen eyes and great cavernous jaws. The mother does not weep; she cannot weep; the power to do so has gone. And yet to see her bairns hungry, and to hear their cry for 'bread!' What a calamity is this 'strike'—this idleness—to her! And the children: well, they are unwitting of the meaning of it all; but nevertheless they are conscious of a new and strange feeling, of a painful pang throbbing in their little stomachs, a pang they certainly never felt before this morning—and yet there isn't so much as a slice of bread on the platter to stop it. 'Wait till father comes home,' says the mother to them over and over again; 'he is away getting something to eat, and he'll soon be home!' Heaven grant he may, but meanwhile their hunger is not satisfied. It is theirs to suffer this morning because, on account of the strike, the bread-

winner has been idle for weeks, and, of course, since there is no work there can be no wages. True, he is a member of the Union; but what are eight or ten shillings a week of seven days to half-a-dozen mouths with the landlord ever clamouring at the door for his rent arrears? True, also, his savings bank account is not surely—but stay; here's where the mischief comes in; he never had any savings bank account, although, in all conscience, he meant to have had one many a time; but there was always a something, you know, to intervene between the desire and its actual fulfilment. So in his extremity this morning there are no few pounds to brighten his 'rainy day,' whose bitterness he and his feel in all its fulness; and thus nobody, nothing, is blameable for it all but that unfortunate strike, which, so demoralizing is it, ruins every year so many homes and lives. It needs not a murder or a suicide to constitute a tragedy; such,

perhaps, may be called the thrilling climax of a life; but it is assuredly in the intermediate scenes, so to speak, of human heart-anguish and suffering where the most realistic tragedy is to be witnessed; in the long, lone, wearisome days and nights of hopelessness, of famishings for that which does not come. And no scene in the varied drama of our everyday life is more pathetic and stirring, or is fraught with so much of this real tragedy than is to be confronted in the home of the workman whose misfortune it is to cry—'Got no work to do!'

Without discussing, what it is unnecessary to do here, the economical principles that regulate the movement of strikes, which are, happily, not so frequent as they used to be, it is very desirable that all who are liable to suffer in any way when they do recur should be prepared in some measure to meet the emergencies they create. Unions and other benevolent societies that do a

little to help workmen when the strike throws them out of the way of earning their wages, are all very well and needful *per se*, but they are as a drop in the bucket, so to speak, thrown on a raging fire. Plainly, therefore, the effort must come from the workman himself. First and last, he is the main factor in the problem how the evil effects of strikes can be avoided, or, at any rate, warded off, so that he and his may not suffer as they have done in the past, or even do at the present time. In the first place, every workman in receipt of full wages should feel himself morally, religiously bound to save something from every pay as a duty to himself, to his family, and to society. Why should it not be a general standing rule with employers to make it binding on their workmen that a small percentage of their weekly earnings should be reserved away for, say, six or twelve months—bearing interest, of course, the while—against dull times, or probable strikes,

or, it may be, the incapacity of the worker himself to earn his weekly wages? Some such arrangement as this—and not a few of the larger employers throughout the country have already adopted it with much success and mutual advantage—could be simply enough entered upon by all who have a large number of workmen in their employ, where the same is subject to the vicissitudes which more or less afflict almost every kind of craftship in these days of stress and competition. Generally speaking, such a rule or arrangement would prove to be of immense advantage alike to employer and employed. The social advantages would, at any rate, be substantial and recompensing. While he works, then, let the chief aim of the workman be, next to doing his service well for his master, to do it well for himself; that is to say, to sensibly and thriftily use the money he earns for his service, so that it shall serve well and happily when comes to

him, as comes some time or another to almost everybody—

> The rainy day and rude
> That sorely buffets and blows,
> Raining such multitude
> Of heart-dismaying woes,
> That the hapless traveller recks not
> How or whither he goes!

In the second place, every workman should endeavour (granting he drinks but little while in work) to drink and smoke *less* when out of work. It may seem paradoxical to put it this way, but nevertheless the fact is only too well known that some men (we do not speak here of working-men only) are very apt to drink and smoke more when they are idle than at any other time. To keep the drooping spirits up, it may be; or to while away the time that hangs so heavily on their hands; or, perhaps, because things are not just as they ought to be, or as they were, at home. If it be, say, for this last reason —*i.e.*, because 'things' are not so bright and comfortable as they were when

he was earning full wages—and how can they, forsooth?—then will he improve matters by drinking at the public-house and spending the few coppers which, if sensibly spent, would have made such a nice, wholesome meal for one day for himself and family? Never, never, never! If he were a man before, albeit a working-man, and by his sobriety and steadiness deserved all that the name signifies, how much more need is there for him now, when thrown out of work, to sustain the honour of the name; now, when overtaken with real hardship, to do his level best—no more—to prove himself a strong, resolute, manly fellow, worthy of the name of workman, and of the dignity of being a citizen of that great nation whose renown and glory, achieved in the past by the prowess of its soldiers and the dexterity of their swords, are now being maintained, and only can be maintained in the future, by the muscle and skill and nerve of its workmen! Many a

theme of a more secular character than that of the moral and social effects of strikes has often been preached from the pulpit; and it is believed by many people that the subject of Thrift in connection therewith might, on many a Sabbath-day, employ the eloquence of not a few of our best preachers, to the great advantage of not only those who are liable more directly to suffer from the evils of strikes, but likewise of many other people more fortunately circumstanced.

AN IMPERIAL HERITAGE.

PERHAPS the hardest-worked woman alive at this moment in Great Britain is our great and good Queen Victoria, whom God save. In certain senses this is absolutely the truth. Consider the many anxious thoughts that throng and throb, like bees in a hive, underneath that fine, ample brow—thoughts for the care and welfare of the many

millions who are bound to do her allegiance and pay her homage, and who, indeed, for the most part do the same, eagerly, fondly, lovingly. The cares of a crown are, we may rest assured, as multitudinous as they are never-ceasing; and so the work of a conscientious sovereign, who seeks to *know* all and *feel* all that interests and moves her subjects, is indeed an imperial heritage—of labour!

'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown:'

not, perhaps, in the sense Shakespeare wrote this undying truth can we say this of our beloved Victoria; but it is none the less true that, wearing the crown of England with its nearly forty million subjects, not to speak of the allegiant millions in India and the colonies who bow to its sovereignty, it is impossible to imagine the brow of our Queen bearing its weight without uneasy thoughts disturbing its seeming serenity, or without actual *work* con-

tinually and laboriously racking the brain within the golden rim. 'All is not gold that glitters;' and it is foolish in the extreme to suppose that to be a king or queen is to be exempt from work: that the life of a sovereign is all music and majesty, pomp, and pageantry, and feasting, — the greatest fallacy in the world! To wear a crown is to be weighted with cares; momentous, imperial they may be, but still—cares; and it is about as absurd to suppose that there is rest and tranquillity on a throne, as it is to say that there is safe and placid anchorage for a great ship by a reef of sunken rocks, or in the vortex of the mäelstrom!

When Queen Victoria comes, as some day in the course of nature even she must come, to resign that crown which she has graced and adorned so nobly, history will record of her nothing more glorious than the fact, patent in ten thousand ways, that whether as queen or as a woman, she was renowned for

her manifold labours, and that she *never wearied in well-doing* for even the meanest of her subjects.

THE WORK OF THE CLERGY.

In the ranks of the clergy as, indeed, in the ranks of almost every profession, there are, of course, workers and workers. But it may safely be said that there is no other profession like that of the minister of the gracious Gospel, wherein a man may, if he choose, never weary in his well-doing, or, preferring to be ever-wearied, never do anything well. As a simple matter of fact, clergymen have great, almost unlimited scope and opportunity in the performance of work of the highest character. Its actual physical range may perhaps be confined only to their parishes or, at any rate, within the bounds of their presbyteries, or dioceses, or circuits; or it may haply not extend beyond their own flockholds; or, in-

deed, as with not a few clergymen, their work, their gospelling, may even be narrowed to the sphere of their pulpits or platforms where, once a week or thereby, they appear with all due dignity and ceremony to perform what is too commonly esteemed the crowning, cardinal act in the routine of their life-work, *i.e.*, preaching the sermon. To test the value as a worker of a man of this class and calling, you have but to strip him of his gown and bands, deprive him of his sermon, and note what of him is left—oftentimes, alas, but the merest parcel of a creature! Even splendid pulpit eloquence, even beauty and saintliness of character, are ornaments by no means sufficient of themselves to justify the claim of a clergyman to share in the high honour and dignity of following in the footsteps of Him who was, before all things else, emphatically a worker—a toiler. Without the Spirit, therefore, of the Great Worker, such a preaching man, albeit

he is crammed full of doctrines, and stuffed with all the philosophies extant, is, humanly speaking, but a sham and a failure. He may have something of the eloquence of a Chalmers, something of the purity of a MacCheyne, and something, too, of the large-heartedness of a Stanley, all which excellences win the world's admiration and merit its plaudits. But, alack! these do not fill God's measure. They are to the needy world as fine and fragrant froth-beads fringing the cup, not the substantial satisfying wine for which men are athirst with an unquenchable desire. With such ornaments to embellish his calling, and with these alone, he is no more to the age, to the day and hour of this acting, 'living present,' than what the faint, miserable flicker of a candle is to the densest midnight from whose depths multitudinous voices cry aloud for 'Light, light, more light!'

The condition of the world to-day is, more than ever it was in the past, one

of clamorous, many-tongued necessity: its wants are more unreckoned in number and unutterable in their variety: human souls are now born into it by the minute, naked and needy: ever coming and going, crowding and struggling across the stage; some imploring, some despairing, some cursing in their extremity, but all being hurried on, away; and yet a chief part in the work of the clergy, co-actors in the drama, is, much of it, but to rail at them, preach at them, throw a bushel of doctrine to them, and bid them give thanks to the God of all good for the Divine mercy. *They*, the crowd, cry, clamour for bread! bread! and *they*, the clergy, offer it—what? a stone? nay, a sermon! 'Thus runs the world away.'

Fair cities are very much like fair faces—their beauty is but skin-deep. Under ordinary conditions the human face is fair to look upon. The face of an infant is beautiful to behold; a

bloomy, youthful face is an exceeding joy; and the countenance of 'wrinkled eld' has, in spite of its pallor, a pathos and a charm peculiarly its own. But, let there be seen a gash across the forehead, or a 'gout of blood' dabbled upon the cheek, or a cancerous sore deforming the feature and devouring the flesh—pah! how the sensitive soul will wince and recoil aghast, and, turning away, seek to forget the sight in other faces that are fair to behold and offend not. Thus is it with the great mass of humanity throbbing beneath the fair front and forehead of the beauty of many of our greater cities. What a binding of bruises and a dressing of wounds and sores every day and hour, there—here, await in thousand forms the skill and tending of the chirurgeon, whether he be known by the name of philanthropist, priest, or preacher! He comes, willing enough in all conscience, and moreover braces himself manfully for the effort to be put forth to tie up

the broken limbs and soothe the sorrowful sores of the sick humanity about him. But he fails initially in his task; for he misapplies his effort, which, for the most part, consists in the talking or preaching of doctrine—doctrine, it may be, good, orthodox and edifying, but yet only doctrine—as unsatisfying to nine-tenths of the needy ones to whom he administers as gaslight to a sickly plant dying for lack of the precious sun. Sad it is to contemplate this wilful, stupid misapplication of so much honest and earnest effort put forth on behalf of humanity by such a vast body of the clergy as they who insist upon reckoning the sermon to be the one instrument, the only motor whereby, humanly speaking, the dumb shall declare, the halt shall run rejoicing, the blind shall see, and the sorrowful soul shall be made happy and expectant.

With a vast number of clergymen the chief end of life, so far as their

'calling' is concerned, is the sermon. In this regard it is the Alpha and Omega of all they think and do. It is, as it were, the single mouthpiece set for their lips to blow forth the official proclamation of their mission to mankind. Or to change the figure, it is the public platter from off which they serve the bread to feed the hungry mouths of their following—aye, and is, much of it, offered as the very soul substance itself. But happily it goes without saying that there are, nevertheless, many of the clergy who have a truly Christ-like idea of action; who amply justify, so far as, humanly speaking, they may, the sacredness of their mission, in devout submissiveness to God's will by their self-sacrifice in His work, as witnessed in their everyday zeal to win hearts and lives rather with the quick, subtle magnetism of their personal brotherly love, than by the vain show of ecclesiastical eloquence exercised on the first day of the week only!

WORK AMONG THE POOR.

THE personal and social sacrifices which the Church of Rome demands of those whom she, of her favour, receives into her inner fold, whether as priests or 'Sisters,' are exemplified in the enforced celibacy of the former, and notably in the exile, so to speak, from the outer living world of certain of the latter class, whose self-dedication to the service of the Church is nothing short of a life-sacrifice of the noblest character. The condition of this latter class is, viewed at least from an outside and unsectarian point of view, pathetic in the extreme. Abandoning the very names by which they were hitherto dearly and familiarly known to their 'worldly' relatives and friends, they, having taken the vow, enter verily upon a new life or condition of life; that is to say, if frequent fasting and praying within the gloom and solitude of the cloister

can be reasonably called 'living.' Henceforth they are known to their few pale, spiritual companions and associates by another name with, belike, a poetical euphony about it; and now, having assumed 'the veil,' they are invariably never again relieved from the bondage of their vows—if bondage it may be called—until in the end, and by the kindly offices of One who, bringing relief and freedom, enters alike the cloister of the saint and the cell of the felon. Without, however, discussing the right or the wrong of all this, which it is quite unnecessary to do here, the 'Sisters' of the Church of Rome command the respect and admiration of all fair-thinking people, of whatsoever creed they may be, for the noble and self-sacrificing manner in which they perform, '*all—all for love, and nothing for reward*,' their acts of charity among our necessitous poor. This, the chief work of their lives, constitutes the highest possible kind of

human heroism, if we remember how much of the ordinary comforts and pleasures of everyday life they forego, and that willingly and cheerfully; and nothing could be more ungallant, nothing more cruel and unkind, than to speak of these Sisters and their noble work in terms of disapprobation, simply because they belong to a part of the great Christian Church whose cardinal faith does not accord with the faith of our own.

All honour to our Sisters of Mercy, —to them who, going forth with brave, courageous hearts, mingle in the human crowd where the conflict is thickest and sorest, there helping the weak, raising the fallen, comforting the desolate! What although they wear garments as of sackcloth?—are they to be sneered at because of their sombre weeds, or because they make the sign of the Cross at the mention of the name of Jesus? Women, indeed, all-worthy of the name!

There are two distinct classes of 'Sisters': those who devote their lives to the especial work of going forth into the noisy world helping and cheering afflicted humanity, and those who, within the silence and solitariness of the cloister, live apart from human kind, inviolate and unseen. It is, of course, with the former class of Sisters that we have to do at present—'Sisters' truly, not in any mere narrow, sectarian sense, but in the broadest human sense; unselfish, devoted, heroic; whose self-imposed duty it is to go out into the darkest and most forlorn places of the great world, bearing in their gentle hands the blessed lamp of love. See with what a sublime devotion does this 'Sister' go about her work; how humbly, how uncomplainingly, how reverently! Where the pest-house is, where lie the fevered, scourge-stricken victims, which men avoid or hurry past in mortal fear and terror—*there* she is ever to be seen with her pale,

patient smile, or, maybe, a tear of pity beautifying her eye — 'a ministering angel' in very truth, in very deed. Or see her following bravely, unflinchingly, in the wake of the war-fiend, heedless of the growl of the guns and the death-danger surrounding her on every side; her presence now here, now yonder, a miracle of devotion to the hapless soldiery sorely in need of her succour. Or see her, if you may, as she descends into that human den in yon dark, dingy close just 'over the way.' As she enters the noisome room, suddenly the shouts and curses cease; strong, brutal-looking men stand aside from her, awkward and abashed, quite put out of countenance before her; their screaming, fighting, swearing wives are, for the time being at least, as demure-looking as, poor creatures, they possibly can be in presence of this meek, mild-faced, soft-tongued 'Sister;' and all about her as she stands there speaking to or pleading with the men (how rebuked they

seem!), or giving a little needful help (for, alas, there are little children about), is transformed from a very Pandemonium of human wickedness and misery into—well, at least into silence, and respect, and wonderment. Like an angel of love, she stands there with a message—a message of peace and goodwill, softening the hearts, silencing into confusion and shame the tongues and the passions of the wretched dram-drinking crew on whom she has suddenly descended. Wherever she goes there is sweetness, light, love—strong, sincere love: there she is, a noble 'working' woman, and yet doing nothing more than her duty—the plain, simple, ordinary duty of her everyday life, and so on to the end of her noble career.

The Sisters of Mercy or Charity attached to the Church of Rome are, in the most eminent degree, missionaries, message-bearers. Their function is mainly *to satisfy* the needs and solici-

tations of poor, hungry, human nature; not only to tell it what *are* its needs, in whatever sense these may be apprehended, but in loving-kindness substantially *to supply* them. In this great work-a-day world, what is commonly called Christian work, as specially directed towards the many thousands and tens of thousands of the poor and needy with whom every city teems, consists not in that mere, formal preaching *at* them, nor in that empty-handed Pharisaism which often — too often, indeed—takes the form of prodigal and not unfrequently impertinent distribution of cheap religious literature or 'tracts;' nay, the world may go on for ever, and the vast sum of human neediness never be one iota the less for all the good, however well intended, that system of Christian work will do. As well try to quench the fire that burns deep in the belly of Vesuvius with a few buckets of water, as to extinguish the hell of human wretchedness and woe

with a few contemptible, maudlin tears of (so-called) Christian sympathy and pity! The world needs help more than pity; succour more than sympathy. It cries out for *bread—bread*—moral and spiritual bread; and alas, for the most part, we give it *a stone!* Still, it is not all 'a stone' that it receives. Many heroic Christian men and women spend their lives, their all, for the benefit of their fellows; and of the latter none deserve the world's admiration more than those ladies (and never could the appellation be more appropriately applied) who, imitative of Him who preferred rather to be the friend and associate of the poor and fallen than of the rich and self-righteous, 'go about continually doing good.'

May the day soon dawn when Christian workers of all creeds and of all churches, by whatever name they may be known, shall strive to acquire this grand heroic *spirit of self-abnegation* for the amelioration of the lives of their weaker and poorer fellows, which is

exhibited nowhere more beautifully, or like to the Great Example, than in the lives and labours of those patient, much-enduring women known to the world as Sisters of Charity.

OUR DIRTY WORK, AND WHO DOES IT.

How is it that, go where you will, the most menial and laborious work is found to be invariably performed by Irishmen? The bricklayer's hodmen, the town's scavengers and dustmen, the delving quarrymen whose lot in life is but on a par with the meanest serfs of Russia or the slaves of North Africa; in fine, all the humblest and hardest occupations or drudgeries are for the most part wrought at by natives of the Green Isle or their descendants. With many people the word 'navvy,' for instance, as commonly used in regard to the hardest possible manual labourer, sweating from morning till night under the variable skies for the barest pittance,

has indeed become synonymous with the name of Irishman. And even in America and the Colonies the same ugly, cruel fact is only too palpably apparent, that the dirtiest, sorest, and most unremunerative tasks in the work of the world are far too commonly performed by our Irish men and women: for in this regard the women, too, are but little better off than the men. Indeed, in many ways they are worse off; because while the work is for them as hard and severe as, if not more prolonged than that of the men, the wages are, of course, proportionately less. For instance, while a 'navvy' can get his fourpence or fivepence per hour for nine hours per day, the female outdoor worker obtains on an average about one penny per hour, toiling very frequently for twelve hours each day of the week, Saturday included. A fine wage, indeed, to grow fat on! Truly one half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives; and yet there are

workers, tens of thousands of them, and mostly women, in our midst toiling wearily for what is called, ironically, *wages*, to whom the above wage of a shilling or so a day would be a positive luxury. But of course somebody must do our dirty work. It is impossible to get along without scavengers, or hodmen, or navvies. They are a very necessary part of the body politic, and nobody cares who does the work—let them be Irish or Indian, Jews or Gentiles, saints or sinners—so long as it is done. It *has*, somehow, to be done, and by somebody. 'Here it is—there's the wage,' says the world; 'do the work, and take your money, and there's an end of it. I care not who or what you *are*.' But it is surely a fact of at least some social, if not political, importance, that just as in not a few of the States of America it is very often the 'heathen Chinee' who undertakes to perform the meanest manual work for the rest of mankind, who, very many of them at

any rate, have come to look upon 'Chinaman John' as a very funny, docile, and obliging human beast of burthen (and thereby hangs a tale!), willing to bear any amount of kicks and curses so long as you don't omit to throw in a cent or two just for the fun of the thing; so, wherever he goes, your orthodox Irishman seems to grow up into existence to serve, humanly speaking, no other purpose but that of toiling for his fellow-men; bending, as it were, his life unceasingly—aye, almost uncomplainingly, as he crouches under the uplifted lash of that iron-handed task-master, the world. Let him but stop his work for a moment, and down will fall the lash sharply and pitilessly; that is, Paddy and Bridget and all the young fry at home will hunger and starve. But, to be sure, there's the almshouse!

It can be said very emphatically and very truly of a very large percentage of the natives of Ireland that, in the

most literal sense possible, 'By the sweat of the brow do they earn their bread.' Certainly, neither Scotsmen nor Englishmen bend themselves to the yoke of labour as do their brothers across the channel. In the words of the song—

> 'While Sawney's a-plodding,
> Fat John sits a-nodding,
> But Pat, with never an oath,
> With 's shovel and broom
> Is sweeping the room,
> To make it right snug for them both.'

CONCERNING TRAMPS.

APART from the ever-welcome signs and aspects of Nature around him, nothing more surely betokens to the dweller in the country the approach of summer weather than the appearance of the well-known figure of the tramp. The lark may haply linger in a more genial clime, and the swallow, too, may loiter by the shores of the sunny South ere each comes to make resonant and gladsome these bleak northern islands, but the

tread of the tramp delayeth not as, passing by his door, it gives warning to the home-keeping cottager within that once again he has come forth from his city haunts to resume his annual rounds where ways are pleasant and constables few and friendly. Not that, like the bat or the bee, *chacun à son gout*, the tramp hybernates in the great city dens and hives during the cold winter months, and only issues forth into the rural highways with the first warm flush of summer; nay, for indeed he is evermore, from January to December, to be encountered

'Wi' wanderin' foot an' weary O!'

a picturesque, although pathetic form, plodding along from hamlet to town, and from town to hamlet. True it is that, sometimes after undergoing many strange mental and physical vicissitudes, the great city beyond is reached, where his identity is at once swallowed up and lost in the rude, restless, multitudinous

sea of humankind, of which he is indeed but the veriest drop. Arrived in the city, he is contemptuously described and treated—when the tyranny of the law, as he reckons it, has occasionally perforce to make him render a summary account of himself—as a mere idler, vagabond, and vagrant—'a cypher in the great (parochial) accompt.' And as such he may probably be sent for a term to gaol or the workhouse; but once set free from the law's environments, which, in sooth, and in a substantial sense, are not always against his liking, the quondam vagrant (how he hates the name!) again detaches himself from the rush and whirl of the—to him—demoralizing city crowds. Shaking the city dust, as it were, from off his feet, he now, from pure force of habit, seeks the quieter suburban outlets, until he finds himself some fine morning hard by a delightful rural lane, where anon he hears without annoyance the shrill, cheery voices of the farmer's boisterous

youngsters, who, as of yore, proclaim him with their usual 'Ho! there goes a tramp!' This, be it said, is the name by which he prefers to be known or called. Any other name, such as that of vagrant, or vagabond, or beggar, a proper, self-respecting tramp thoroughly despises and detests, and, with all the strength and feeling of his nature, resents the insult to himself which the epithet implies. And as, poor soul, he has but little, comparatively, to prefer in this world, let him meanwhile enjoy his preference in this regard, and be known by the more respectable and reputable name and style of tramp. For there is no grade or class of our common human brotherhood but has an inborn regard for its own especial caste. An earl or a costermonger, each is alike jealous of his caste, and would wax wroth were it held up to scorn; why, then, ridicule the tramp for regarding his, albeit he is only a fringe, so to speak—and often, too, a useless one—

on the skirts of society? Although he hangs there, as it were, by a mere tag, yet is he a part of the body politic—so let him pass!

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the tramp—or, at all events, that which is most apparent to the ordinary observer—is his marvellous ubiquitousness. The wide world, it would sometimes seem, is all too small for him. He is here, there, everywhere, and that, too, to use an Americanism, 'all at once.' The following story, apropos of this peculiarity, illustrates the fact as it appeared to the young idea. In a certain village school not a hundred miles from the city of ——, a class of young girls were not long ago asked to write a brief essay descriptive of their native village. One of the youngsters wrote as follows: 'There's an old kirk, an inn where folk get fou, and a smiddy in the village of W——, which is famous for its drucken minister, its strong snuff, and as *a grand howff*

for tramps!' Leaving out the 'drucken minister' and the 'strong snuff,' what village is there in the broad United Kingdom that is not in some way or at some time or another a 'grand howff for tramps,' and such-like human birds of passage? The ubiquitousness of the tramp, of course, implies his numerousness as a class; and without going into the statistics of the matter, there has been apparently a great increase in the number of tramps during recent years, which would indicate that, among other and for obviously converse reasons, such as what tyrant Necessity often creates, there undoubtedly exists a certain infective fascination, an unaccountable attractiveness in tramp-life for certain peculiarly constituted natures. Tramps have been known to take to the road just for the love of the thing—strange yet likeable individuals, to whom the restraints of ordinary everyday life were irksome beyond endurance. They required, they have sometimes urged, to be ever on

the move, otherwise life were not worth the living! These were, happily, few-and-far-between specimens of human nature; for the true tramp, he of the genus *vagabond*, is one who only 'foots it on compulsion.' But there are many tramps, perpetual peripatetics, to whom the multifarious experiences of an ever-varying way of life are, indeed, a *sine quâ non* of their existence, and for whom the 'pot-luck' of the road has actually more delights than the table of the epicure. They must needs, by the very requirements of their odd, restless natures, evermore wander about the country, encountering, we may be sure, strange bedfellows, giving and taking with an easy *nonchalance* that is bred of the experience of those who

> 'Go up and down, and here and there.
> And make themselves a motley to the view.'

The army of tramps, although representing a body of individuals many in number and various in kind and character, is recruited, generally speaking,

from a very limited class or representation of the people. One half of the number are, on their own confession at least, idle workmen whom the merciless strike or dull times have thrown out of the way of earning wages. And nothing, surely, is more pitiful than to meet with those unfortunate fellows, many of whom are accompanied by wives and children, trundling wearily along from place to place in search of employment. When, for instance, a great strike occurs in the busy trade-centres, nothing is more common than to see the main roads leading from those places literally crowded for the time being with the locked-out and idle men and their families, eager to go elsewhere, which they must perforce do on foot, in that saddest of all quests, to look for work. As a class, however, these are only tramps *pro tem.;* for when they reach their destinations, and should they be fortunate to obtain that for which they encountered the hardships of the road,

—the frowns of mankind, as well as the buffets of nature—they rarely again, unless from the direst necessity, set out on a similar journey. But the other half are they who, many of them at all events, substantially justify the proverb, 'Once a tramp, always a scamp.' To find work and so earn an honest wage is not their object in taking the road; it is rather to shirk work and to procure, which they do with varying success in the wide and more bountiful country, that which is more difficult to obtain in towns and cities, where they would soon become known to those whom it concerns as pests and provokers of the peace. Yet reasons other than those referred to have, however, induced many persons to become tramps, and, shunning the crowds of mankind that congregate in cities, wander up and down our highways—

'Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow.'

It is related of a man that he took to

the road many years ago because of his failure to enter the ministry. He was, in short, a 'stickit' minister. His non-success in the ordeal of 'the preachment' had, unfortunately, affected his head a little, and so he turned his back on mankind. Another became a tramp because of his scolding wife, so justifying in his conduct the scriptural reference to the raging woman. Another took the road because of the imagined injustice of his having to pay house-rent; and yet another because he felt the town cramped him so. Many other instances might be given of strange inducements that have caused men to forsake the society of their fellows and find that solace, which they could not obtain in the world of mankind, in perpetually wandering up and down the greater world of nature. But those above-quoted examples are sufficient to show that while many tramps are only the lazy, hulking fellows they seem, sorely in need of a good sousing in the

nearest duck-pond, and then of a twelve-months' stone-breaking to reduce their weight, many, too, are to be for-gathered with who really deserve the interest, if not the compassion, of the wayfarer. A chat with one of the latter class is, indeed, often worth one's while, for something unusually interesting may occasionally be learned; as once, for example, when, after a lengthened period of drought, the writer met a tramp and accosted him with the remark that 'it was now going to be wet,' he was answered with the quaint reply, 'Aye, sir; the snails will get a drink the nicht!'

OWLISH MEN.

THERE are but few barns that have not their owls perched away somewhere in a corner—moping, sullen! There they sit brooding, ever brooding; far-recessed; with their great eyes feasting, as it were, upon the darkness; giving every now and then an eerie

'scritch! scritch!' but seldom stirring so much as a feather! So in almost every sphere of life there are people to be encountered who do nothing but mope — mope all their sad lives through; human owls whose barn is Self; who never give forth any mortal utterance but what bodes of some evil to come, either to themselves or to their neighbours. For such creatures life is all dark as midnight; there is no sun-glint to cheer them, or haply if the sun shine they must needs, like the owl, 'blink at it'; no blithe lark-song for them, for they are, as it were, asleep; their heavy ears hear it not, or haply if they do, the melody so scares them that they can but cry 'scritch! scritch!' again. And just as owls infest old, tumble-down barns, or, if you care to have it more elegantly, just as they haunt the hoary ruins of grand, historical edifices — castles, churches and abbeys—making those waste places ghostly and uncanny, to

be avoided by the foolish, the fearful and the imaginative, so there are men to be met with in almost every rank and condition of human estate, whose lives are as the lives of those gloomy birds of night—sullen and sad of mind, *lazy of hand and heart,* indolent, 'loving the darkness rather than the light,' mopish and moody, just because 'it is their nature to;' in fine—owlish!

Did you ever know children to be in the surroundings of such mortals? Never! There is a test of their humanity.

'CAVE CANEM!'

THERE are three things which sensible people will always, if they can, endeavour to avoid: First—*A mad dog;* second—*Wet paint;* and third—*Rubbing against a baker or chimney-sweep!* Ah! if they would only, with the same instinctive dread, give the go-by to the companionship of the liar, whose tooth is envenomed as with a subtle,

deadly poison; to the immoral man, the pruriency of whose converse so corrupts and tarnishes that it will, in time, overspread the whole soul just as the lazar's loathsomeness slowly and surely covers his body; and likewise to the *lazy, indolent man* who is known to all as one from off whose garment they will, if they but rub shoulders with him, catch such infection of slothfulness as will assuredly disfigure and unbeautify their character; if, indeed, they would but steer clear of such men as they do of a dangerous dog, or a new-painted casement, or a flour-dusty baker, fearful lest they get bitten, or soiled, or besmirched, how much less rueing and regretting would there be in the world!

THE WORD 'MENIAL.'

How hateful is the word 'menial' when applied to service! It should be deleted from the vocabulary of every right-hearted man and woman. Its use often

disheartens those towards whom it is applied, and besides, it is a contemptible word in the mouths of those employing it. Under no circumstances whatever ought masters and employers to use it *against* those in their service; it is an un-English, unchristian, ungentlemanly, tyrannical word. Whatever the nature of the work your servants do for you, never talk of them, or to them, as menials! There surely is nothing menial about work, no matter how humble or hard it be; for it is only a mere incident whether we are masters or servants, do-nothings or drudges; but it is indubitably a fact that in this regard we are all alike servants in the great Task-master's eye, and equally bounden to Him.

WHAT OUR CHILDREN SHOULD SING.

How absurd, how cruel it is of parents and teachers to learn young people to sing such hymns, etc., conveying

sentiments that imply weariness or pain, as indicate a desire for repose and tranquillity. Fancy a school or band of young eager-throated, merry-voiced children, happy and free as the larks that cleave the blue of heaven, singing such a Sunday-song as 'There is rest for the weary!' and other numberless hymns of the kind, crammed with such stupid, inane rubbish. Out upon the pernicious custom! Fie on this mockery of the beauty of childhood and youth and hope! Parents, look to it. Teach your young people no such mawkish, pitiful, unreal sentiment; it will positively hurt them, and retard the healthy growth of their moral—aye, and physical nature too. Your youngsters should not, cannot be weary; they don't need (unless you are to blame!), don't want *to rest*, but infinitely rather to strive, to work, and sing happy health-giving 'working' songs, or hymns if you like. Why put the croak of the old winter-beaten raven in

the throat of the blithe, spring-born lark?

DUTY.

DUTY is the sternest and, as people are often apt to think, the hardest task-master in this world of work; but who would not serve under him, sweat for him, throb heart and brain for him—aye, to the cracking or bursting point? Since the world began—'a great while ago'—how many heroic souls have laid themselves low in sacrifice, and that for our imitation, at Duty's oftentimes deathful command? Yet, we need not necessarily be great, strong souls, mighty heroes or martyrs, in order to suffer gloriously for Duty's sake. For what is Duty but the voice of God inspiring us to be true and brave men and women, to do our work as it deserves to be done—nothing more and nothing less!

AN OBNOXIOUS ORTHODOXY.

THAT idea of a perpetual 'life' of rest in the world to come is, somehow, to a healthy nature *not the thing!* To entertain such a thought, to anticipate, to long for its realization bespeaks a sour, life-begrudging discontentedness in the mind of the man or woman nursing it. There may be no great harm in a person, after a stormful life, to long for the 'rest to be;' it is natural and, perhaps, unavoidable. But the mischief is in the idea of a supine soul for ever rehearsing the praises of the Eternal, and so 'resting' throughout the great HEREAFTER in an attitude of awful adoration; a most obnoxious orthodoxy, in all conscience! Yet it is preached to tens of thousands every week.

LIFE-REGRETS.

HE enjoys the most perfect possible happiness who, when declined into the vale of years, has the fewest regrets

to disturb his peace of mind, to gnaw away the life in his heart as leeches suck the blood. What a pitiful creature is he, grey-haired and wrinkled, who sits all the day long ever-regretting —regretting this sin, rueing that one; counting over, miser-like as it were, in bitter thoughts and with sad, painful heart-throbs, the cost (heaven alone can reckon up the sum of it!) of the errors done in those rare days gone by, when the blood was in its hey-day and 'the way of life' yet far—unimaginably far—from falling into 'the sere and yellow leaf.' Alas! could he but mumble aloud those unutterable thoughts of his, methinks his bitterest regret of all would assuredly concern his *prodigality of time*—those profligate years of his when, instead of trimming his little plot of life, he was otherwhere, leaving it to itself, all untended, and permitting the basest weeds to grow rankly within its borders, so that all the beauty and fragrance of those once

fair, promising flowers were long, long ago blanched and scattered away by a thousand winds of mischance and wrongdoing.

How short, how transitory is this life—men ever complain. True, true indeed; but how often do they use the ground of their complaint as a pretext for idleness! Thus it is that with many people life is, in fact, 'a dream;' a prolonged, perpetual 'sleep;' an abiding, unshifting darkness, which Death only deepens and makes palpable! What a better and brighter (because *busier*) world this would be if men would but delete from the page of their thoughts such notions of this, our mortal life, under whose influence they sit and fret themselves into their grey hairs and, anon, into their graves.

In a strong, brave 'working' man's vocabulary these terms are all obsolete. They are as a dead, unspoken language to him; or, at all events, are parts of a

dialect which he has no time, no need to employ in fulfilling his part, however humble it be in this work-a-day, wakeful, living world.

WHIMPERING PEOPLE.

MEN or women who do their work in a whimpering, whining way, because it happens to be distasteful, were never known to come to much in the world. Depend upon it their moral fibre is exceptionally weak, and, should you care to observe their course of life, liable to give way very easily. A whimperer is worse than a fool. He is a craven. Work may be and very often is, uncongenial. Why, nine out of every ten people you know will acknowledge that, in some sense or other, the work they have to perform is uncongenial. They ought to be at something else and better, they will tell you; but if they are blessed with but a modicum of common-sense, will, at the same time, allow that they must be con-

tented with their sphere of labour, and as there is no help for it, they will, God helping them, work away and thrive! Why whimper, forsooth? To do so is only to be like the puny, sick child who, with a great to-do, keeps, while making the wryest imaginable grimaces, the nasty, nauseous medicine in his mouth when it should be swallowed down for his purging!

DIVES.

WHAT was the tormenting flame of Dives in hell, whence he lifted up his eyes, being in torment?

Was it the thought of his money-bags plucked from his hands for ever? Or his lordly neglect of the starving Lazari crouching at his gates? Or the prodigality of his years spent in splendid and luxurious idleness and wantonness? Alas! the fury of his flame gnawed him most grievously just *there*. That was it —the *consciousness*—dark as night before, but now lit up with all the glare of hell

—of his wasted opportunities! Oh, give him but a year, a day, an hour, a moment of time back again to himself, and he will cram an eternity of well-doing into it!

So it is with many people when they come to reap their whirlwind. How they cry to God *to put back His universe* to where it was even but yesterday, so that they may undo all the evil they did, and do all the good they didn't, but had intended to, only that the chances, *i.e.* the moments, slipped away, like water, through their fingers, and, alas! the good deeds were all unperformed.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR.

A FEW drops of brave honest sweat on the brow of a toiling labourer—let him be a hodman with his load of bricks, or a miner delving in the dark, dangerous caverns of the earth, or a ploughman guiding his team afield—each sweating, toiling, moiling for bread—bread for

waiting wife and hungry 'bairns'—are as honourable to him as the gems that gleam on an earl's coronet; aye, are as precious as the crown itself on a king's forehead, and often, indeed, become him more worthily.

A NOBLE SENTIMENT.

WHAT a fine, manly, noble-thoughted Scot was he, old Jamie Melrose of B——, who, when he came to his death-bed, after a long life of hard and humble toil as a stone-breaker, expressed the hope (how quaint and original the idea!) that he 'Wadna hae ower muckle psalm-singing to do in the New Jerusalem, whaur he hoped he wad soon be, but he was *wullin' to work at onything wi' his haunds, if the Maister wanted him'!*

A PREACHER'S DIVISION OF THE PEOPLE.

THE late well-known and loved Rev. William Arnot once said in a sermon that it was his habit frequently to

classify people into the three following divisions: Those who were given to say, Ah! those who were given to say Oh! and those who said neither. The last lot, he was sure, were *the best at their work;* for people who were always ejaculating their 'Ah's!' and 'Oh's!' were bound to be wasting their time in saying or doing what was unnecessary or superfluous.

PORTRAIT OF A MAN DESTINED TO A LONG LIFE.

THE following portrait of a man destined to a long life was drawn by the great German physician, Hufeland, already referred to in these pages; and while in all respects the subject may not in all points be armed 'cap-à-pie' for the fight against the 'thousand deaths that lie hid' in this life, threatening even the strongest of our race at almost every step in his career, still he is about as well equipped as it is possible for a mortal to be:

'He has a proper and well-proportioned stature, without, however, being too tall. He is rather of the middle size, and somewhat thick-set. His complexion is not too florid; at any rate, too much ruddiness in youth is seldom a sign of longevity. His hair approaches rather to the fair than the black; his skin is strong, but not rough. His head is not too big; he has large veins at the extremities, and his shoulders are rather round than flat. His neck is not too long, and his legs are firm and round. He has also a broad arched chest, a strong voice, and the faculty of retaining his breath for a long time without difficulty. In general there is a complete harmony in all his parts. His senses are good, but not too delicate; his pulse is slow and regular. His stomach is excellent, his appetite good, and his digestion easy. The joys of the table are to him of importance; they tune his mind to serenity, and his soul partakes in the pleasure

which they communicate. He does not eat merely for the sake of eating; but each meal is an hour of daily festivity, a kind of delight attended with this advantage, with regard to others, that it does not make him poorer, but richer. He eats slowly and has not too much thirst, for too great thirst is always a sign of rapid self-consumption. In general he is serene, active, loquacious; susceptible of joy, love and hope, but insensible to the impressions of hatred, anger, avarice: his passions never become too violent or destructive. If he ever gives way to anger, he experiences rather a useful glow of warmth, an artificial and gentle fever, without an overflowing of the bile. In particular, *he is fond of employment,* enjoys calm meditation and agreeable speculation; is an optimist, a friend to nature and domestic felicity; has no thirst after riches or honour, and banishes all thoughts of to-morrow!'

PLODDERS.

PEOPLE sometimes say cynically of their acquaintance, 'Oh, he's nothing at all—he's only a plodder!' forgetting that it is the plodder who does *something*, though tardily, for the good of the world; something, very little maybe, but still *something* that will abide after they themselves are gone and forgotten.

Plodders are what the world *needs*. There are, in all conscience, too many nimble-brained geniuses who try to amuse the world, but who, instead, only waste its time to no purpose.

There never was a plodder but who, where it was possible to learn something of his circumstances, was worth money, ploddingly and, you may be sure, honestly saved.

If a plodder produce nothing more than, in the course of years, his personal and social independence, and is capable

of showing nothing more or better than, say, his savings bank book with substantial pounds sterling at his credit, he does well and nobly, and is a gentleman!

A crow flies far and high, *builds in lofty trees, and makes a great to-do,* and that only to produce other crows, who, in their turn next season, only make more noise, and so on; but see yon heavy, waddling, ungainly duck: how contented she is with her mud-pool, wherein to sport herself and lay her daily egg! What although she does quack a bit now and again? There is somebody substantially the better for her living—a fatter purse and a healthier body.

THOUGHTS ON WORK.

WORK often maims, and sometimes kills, but it's the *worry* that murders men.

Work means health, wealth, respect, honour, position, nobility—indeed, there is scarcely a benefit or virtue it will not sometimes, in some way, win for a man or woman, whether he begins life by doing errands, or she the 'meanest chars' in the scullery of a hospital.

Assuredly work will help, most materially, to prolong a man's life; that is to say, when, like everything else, he does it in moderation. Men who attain to a great age have, you may be sure, always worked while they were able. Their activity freed them from anxiety. 'Oh!' somebody says, 'but there's So-and-so and So-and-so—they are both fourscore and are yet hale and hearty men, and *they* were never known to work.' Nay, sir, your test won't stand! Indeed? Such men don't *live;* they merely *don't die!*

The highest, most heroic, and godlike endowment the Almighty has be-

stowed on man is the capacity to work; and he who stultifies his gift in wanton idleness, neither moving muscle nor working brain to contrive the veriest 'jot or tittle' of good for his fellow-men, is assuredly the most contemptible creature in the world, and would be quite unworthy of a place in it but for the one redeeming fact that God made him.

A change of work, *i.e.* occupation, will often do more good to an over-taxed brain than merely absolute rest can. The active brain must have work of some kind to do, just as the stream-moved mill must have corn to grind. Give it no grist, and in time the stones will grind themselves to powder; or stop it altogether, and the green mould will soon cover it.

It is thought that, on the whole, men live as long now as they ever did. The tear and wear and hurry of modern life,

from which our ancestors were blissfully exempt, are in some measure compensated to us by our possessing better opportunities, which they lacked, of appreciating life—that is to say, occupations are more, infinitely more, multiplied and varied now, whereas in former times they could almost be counted on one's fingers, and men had invariably to adopt the same occupations which their forefathers had followed in an unbroken line for generations before them.

Work is invariably a good medicine, and produces for the worker more benefit to body and brain when in need of it than all the drugs and doctors extant. Work often is Nature's remedy in healing men: it helps them to forget their sorrows; for, working, they have not time to nurse them, and so they get them the sooner forgotten, buried underground—out of sight, out of mind. But how the idle man broods over his

troubles, like a gloomy hen above her chickens! See how he magnifies them, multiplies them, mortifies them into his very being, so that his life passes from day to day without a spark of genuine joy to cheer it, without even the very shadow of the semblance of hope to direct it onwards to a better existence.

Just as a dead thing will breed maggots and in time corrupt the healthy air about it, so the dead life, the idle man, is as a pestiferous sore in the body politic, doing it, in subtle ways, unthought of mischief, corrupted and corrupting.

No work, whatever it be, great or little, can rightly succeed unless initially and finally there be order and method in it.

Method is but another name, and often a better, for genius; for the men

of the most surpassing genius known to the world were habitually methodical men. Talk of Inspiration, forsooth! She is but the handmaid to Method, in whose presence she is all-subservient.

Nothing puzzles the sceptic more than the *method* everywhere apparent in this vast system of Being around him, and above him, and beyond him. What meaning there is in it all, he cannot or may not care to say; but, of course, while he scouts the idea of an all-controlling methodical mind governing what he is pleased to call natural laws, yet you may be sure this mighty, all-prevailing *genius of method* which inspires even himself, perhaps, to do his daily work methodically, reasonably and well, he will sometimes consider and contemplate with dumb, mysterious awe, if not with inward fear and trembling.

Looking up, a man, if he cares to, may behold the sun in his splendour or the stars in glorious congregation. Looking down, at his feet he may note —well, it may be only a daisy peeping shyly up at him, or a writhing worm, or a beetle labouring to get out of his path; or haply, if he dwell in the city, he may see nothing but the bare, stony pavement or guttered causeway strewn with garbage. Looking straight ahead, he may greet the beaming face of a friend advancing with smiling eye to eye. Yet, looking up, heavenward; or down, earthward; or straight ahead, worldward—how many people are there who live their years through, blind-natured as though they had been born without eyes, or ears, or hands, or hearts, or souls, 'sans everything' almost, for that matter, but mouths; seeing nothing, hearing nothing, feeling nothing, doing nothing, but yet living!

THE USE OF HANDS AND BRAINS.

HANDS and brains were given to men and women that they might be *used, not abused.* To some, hands to hew or to swing the hammer; hands to hold plough or drive the locomotive. To others, brains to weigh and consider; brains to invent, to contrive, to control. To each a *force,* to be employed diversely for the good of others as well as for themselves.

AN OLD CRY.

IT is an old cry, and still a universally common one, that this life is all too short a life. It is, we are told,

> 'Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
> Swift as a shadow, short as any dream.'

From Minstrel David himself down, men have in all ages mourned the brevity of life; the suddenness and swiftness with which it is swallowed up in darkness and nothingness. Why,

there is nothing existing under heaven that can convey to the human mind any notion of the brevity of the life of man but has been, in some way or other, employed in the language of metaphor to show how 'few are his days and full of woe.' The vast storehouse of Nature has been ransacked for similes to indicate to him (were that needed) the transitoriness of his state, and the vocabulary of human speech itself has been exhausted in the effort to express the same. 'Man's life passeth as a shadow!' The falling leaf, the seaward-flowing stream, the morning cloud, the impearling dewdrop, the setting sun, the nightly passing pageantry of the heavens, the subtle, electric flash leaping forth from the quarried gloom—all these and many more common, natural facts serve to illustrate the great, omnipresent fact of the littleness and mutableness of our human state. Yet, in truth, what a spell of time is three-score-and-ten,

not to speak of four-score years! How much may a man not do in that span (let us call it so!), if he will! A dream, forsooth?—a shadow this? Truly a dream, surely a shadow, if there be no work done *ere the passing* of the dream, or the speeding of the shadow!

It is a pitiful wail, this everlasting, universal cry in the mouth of humanity —'Life is short!' Children, almost ere they can lisp their language, are taught the wearisome dirge; and how frequently are they to be heard in their Sunday-schools and elsewhere chorusing its melancholy refrain! Old, toothless men and women mumble it as they would mouth a sweet morsel, retailing, with a shake of the head, the delectable saying to everybody they meet—'Vanity, vanity, all is vanity and vexation of spirit!' Vanity, do they say? Where? There is no vanity, surely, in good, sterling, solid work done; no vexation of spirit in glorious grey hairs, even though they overshadow a

thoughtful forehead and a feeble vision, which hard, honest toil may have wrinkled and impaired. Nay, work is not vanity, in all truth. Then, life cannot be vain if spent honestly, zealously, workingly. Let them cry 'Vanity, vanity,' who have done nothing in their time. The 'Preacher's' saying was meant for such wailers, and for them only. Having murdered life's opportunities, let them cry aloud like Macbeth:—

> 'Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
> That struts and *frets* his hour upon the stage,
> That then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying *Nothing!*'

GOD'S METHOD IN CREATION.

MEN talk of the creation of man as God's masterpiece; and so man must be, since he is created in the likeness and image of the Maker. Thus it is, then, that the making of the heavens and the earth was but, as it were, a mere incident

in the thought of the Omnipotent, because to create man in the likeness of Himself was His chief purpose and plan; but the *method* of His plan was, first, to prepare the habitation whereon he might 'live, and move, and have being'—*i.e.*, the earth to dwell upon, the sun and stars to warm and comfort him by day and night; then the lower orders were made ere the lord of creation himself was brought forth upon the scene as the warranty and justifier of his Master's workmanship.

Method is the very soul and essence of work. For work, no matter of what kind, that has no method in it is like a ship without its chart on board, whereof let the voyager beware! It may be possible to take such a vessel across the ocean into the harbour far away yonder, but how dangerous, how insane were the attempt.

God is never at rest. It is His attribute, His very nature to work,

whether it be to mark the fall of a sparrow to the ground, or number with Fatherly care the hairs of the head of one of His earthly children; whether it be to receive the homage and adoration of the archangelic hosts, or to mark in pity the tear of some humble widow by her solitary hearth; whether it be to 'foil the tempter's power' in the heart of a poor, weak sinner, or to control the destinies of systems beyond our own, all-subservient to His power —that self-same power that called them forth into activity and light out of darkness and chaos!

A METHODICAL MAN.

LET us admire the methodical man for his method—he is bound, somehow, to succeed. He will do more and, oftentimes, better service to his day and generation than the brilliant fellow without it; besides, you can invariably *depend* on the methodical man. He is

always up to time, whereas the other can't be trusted—you can't be sure of him. A man of method is bound to have many virtues in his character; for as he pieces out his life's work—or, say, his daily work—to be done bit by bit, arranging it so that he knows precisely how and where to take it up, we may be pretty sure that this attribute, or principle, or habit, or whatever you care to call it, will be seen in his behaviour in and towards his family and social relationship, and with regard to his own secret conscience.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S EFFORT.

WHAT would the genius of, say, Sir Walter Scott have been without the high-born faculty of method to guide and control it aright? Of the many splendid virtues which adorned the character of that magnanimous-minded man, none did him (and the world) greater service, none wrought more

honour and renown and wealth than the grand methodical principle which shaped his work, his life. Without it, his genius would have served but little practical purpose. He would have been like a rider on a high-mettled steed, with no rein to control, or bit to curb it, and which would have, very likely, flung him, to his own and the world's hurt and detriment, before he had gone far on his journey. But with method, ordering aright that mighty brain-machinery of his, he achieved miracles of work, the hardest possible work, and that in such a way as to command the wonder and admiration of all. Had Sir Walter not possessed this splendid faculty, could he have paid off that overwhelming debt which was unfortunately scored against him? Why, he was only one in a million able to do it. With the rest, it would have been to their lives as the down-dragging nether-millstone; but this methodical, magnanimous hero in due time and with a courageous

determination to fight against overwhelming odds, was enabled comparatively (and had he lived a little longer he would have attained the cope-stone of triumphant victory) to brush the load from his shoulders as lightly as he would a feather!

DETAIL IN WORK.

WORKERS, above all be attentive to *details*. In this lies the surety of success and accomplishment in whatever you do. No conception of the Omnipotent is more inspiring than that which exhibits His *mightiness* in regard to His care for, and attention to, little, sometimes—to man's thinking—contemptible things. The dazzling splendours of Jupiter, far-set yonder in the deep infinite crown of the night, are not half so inspiring to me, seem not a tithe so wonderful to my thoughts, as this little fern-leaf with its marvellous device of veinëd life. In it God speaks to us, as it were, in detail, regardfully, omnipotently, divinely indeed!

When God made the world and created man to live in it, He never intended, we may be sure, to increase the race to such an extent that life would become uncomfortable and intolerable. No, there is nothing *narrowing* in the scheme of the Divine, Omnipotent Builder! His Plan of the Universe was divinely conceived *in detail as in general;* and even the tiny nest 'which the sparrow hath built for herself' was of the same account to Him as the ordering of the Pleiades that nightly muster in the plains of heaven.

IDLERS AT A DISCOUNT.

MAY we not hope, may we not, indeed, expect that a time will come, sooner or later, when there will be no place in society, no corner in this work-a-day world for the idler—a long-desired day in the history of the progress of the people whose ever more and more pressing requirements will crush him relentlessly out of all existence; when

the rush and rapidity of life's events will, in their overwhelming momentousness, sweep him out of sight, just as when, in the autumn of the year, there comes upon the dry parched land a great spate of waters overwhelming all the still and waste-lying 'holms' and 'haughs,' carrying down with an irresistible force and sweep all the rotting branches, withering leaves, and gross accumulations of the hot summer's drouth that pestifered in the atmosphere, and finally bearing them all out of sight into the great swallowing sea beyond?

True, indeed, this is but the eighteen hundred and eighty-sixth year of Christian grace, and for that matter it might have been a millennium more, for in the light of eternity what signifies a figure? But while remembering that the Omnipotent assuredly records the passing of time, not by years, nor by centuries, nor by millenniums, but by the accomplishment or fulfilment of Divine

law and government, the thought is forced upon us that, had not idle men been in the past just as idle men are to-day, fetters to the feet of Time, drags on the wheels of the car of human progress, wearisome burthens and intolerable incubi on the fretting body-politic, then surely this present year of grace in which, on this little planet, we live, move, and have being, had been fraught with more of that righteousness and knowledge which foreshadow the coming of His Presence who is King and Author of the same.

THE WORK OF THE PHYSICIAN.

THE medical man with a large family practice to attend to is, as a rule, about the hardest-worked professional of all. For instance, as compared with him, the advocate has, indeed, in the matter of actual work done from day to day and year to year, a very bed of roses to rest on, while the doctor trudges over a

path of thorns. The clergyman, again, can, if he like, take life easier than the physician. A sorrowing, sin-awakened soul may, postpone till next week the getting of an answer by the lips of the clergyman to his cry, 'What must I do to be saved?' But a fractured leg requires immediate attention, or the limb may mortify and a life is lost. So the surgeon, newly abed, perhaps, after a weary day's toil, is, *must be*, 'sans ceremony,' rung up and hurried off to the bedside of the sufferer.

The physician is assuredly, in this work-a-day world, the very ideal of a glorious worker—ever 'going about doing good,' in emulation of Him who to this end came among men, alike to the poor, the needy, the oppressed, the bruised—came a veritable *healing* Missionary from 'a far countrie.'

JOURNALISTS AND THEIR WORK.

THERE is, perhaps, no class of men who have to work harder than that

large class, ever increasing, connected with journalism. The world's constant demand for news and knowledge at this hurrying moment necessitates a vast, unthought-of amount of incessant toil, done for the most part *while it is asleep*, by those whose duty it is to supply the same in the popular form of the newspaper. Does paterfamilias supping his chocolate at the breakfast-table ever consider (but why should he, indeed?), as he reads his morning paper, the labour that has been expended in the night-time in supplying him with his marvellous pennyworth?

'Light! light! more light!' is the cry of the world to-day—and, thank Heaven, nobody need abide in the darkness; but is not the editorial brain, in a sense, the *oil* which, in this great epoch of letters, *feeds* the lamp that *supplies* that light?

As a rule, to which, of course, there

are bound to be exceptions, journalists are not a long-lived class. In her great economy Nature somehow omitted, in moulding the human framework of the journalist, to provide him who, for the most part, works not 'while it is to-day, but, rather, when the night cometh,' with stronger heart-valves and firmer brain-nerves than his neighbours. And until the time comes when this tyrant necessity shall no longer exist for men having to work their brains when, in the most natural course of things, they should be resting them, it is to be feared that the journalist will be unable to rank himself among those more-favoured people whose days are, 'by reason of strength,' prolonged to the ordinary and orthodox limit of human life.

Alas! Were it but possible to conceive of such a 'good time coming,' our millennium men might forecast their prophetic horoscopes with almost mathematical precision, and tell to a

day when this, their great consummation, will come to pass.

But (say you) what has work, forsooth, or journalists to do with the millennium? In all seriousness, friend, only this: that there is nothing, nobody working harder at this moment, helping to bring on the millennium for you, than the truth-diffusing newspaper and that man's brain feeding and controlling it.

ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE TIME.

THIS is, indeed, an age of problems. In science, in religion, in social life, there probably never was a time, in modern history at all events, when so many riddles pressed themselves for solution on the minds and hearts of the people as at the present day. And for the most part they are questions—some of them of vast and far-reaching significance—which our time certainly can never hope either fully or finally to answer. It is, however, with the many

problems which certain aspects of our modern social life present with which the world, generally speaking, is more directly concerned, and in which its interest is more spontaneously excited.

The problems of science and those of religious speculation doubtlessly are claiming the earnest regard of many students and thinkers in all parts of the globe; but the latter are a minus quantity compared with the numbers of our fellows for whom the many problems of everyday life are ever-pressing questions of the most paramount and thrilling interest. And to this great and never-ceasing task of endeavouring to interpret such problems aright for the general good there are happily no end of willing workers and thinkers. Such, too, were never more numerous than they are to-day. They are, moreover, to be found in all ranks and classes of the people, from the heir to the throne, who sets himself the task of helping to solve the problem how our poor can be

better housed, to the—well, to the humblest or meanest individual of the community who, by the rectitude of his own life-conduct, if none other means be within his power, helps forward, even though in an unobtrusive manner, the cause of thrift or of temperance, which in themselves constitute not the least interesting or important features of the social problems of the time. Between these two degrees of personal influence and individual effort in helping to solve those problems there is such a vast army of men and women spending their lives and giving their estates as surely was never before paralleled in history. Indeed, the fact may be said to have, in a certain sense, developed only another and assuredly a hopeful feature in the character of this marvellous, multitudinous nineteenth century. But how far its influence on the mass of the people in ameliorating, or likely to ameliorate, their condition, physically first and morally after—for all such

effort is abortive if it does not succeed in this—a succeeding generation, it is to be feared, will have to prove.

On the whole, it will probably have a healthy and improving effect, although much of the effort is naturally being spent unwisely through ignorance, or bigotry, or jealousy, or all three combined. How to conserve this effort with the view of producing the best results is a matter which, humanly speaking, is almost impossible to answer.

* * * *

After all, with the evolution of the years, with the coming and speeding of successive generations of mankind, new problems, touching upon every department of thought or action, and now quite unimagined, will ever arise, we may be certain, to baffle the human mind and dismay the human heart; and in spite of those new experiences and higher advantages which each successive age brings and accrues to the

general benefit of the uprising families of the race, every movement onward but reveals fresh, untrodden pathways that are found to be beset with new and undreamed-of difficulties, alike in the speculations of science, in religious thought and life, and in the social affairs of men. We cannot escape the penalties and environments of our mortal estate, any more than we can elude our shadows.

STARVATION WORK.

ANY inquiry, even of the most superficial kind, into the subject of the work of the poor and how they are remunerated for it, will always reveal many sad and melancholy facts—facts that must, perforce, excite the sympathy of every man and woman able in the least degree to better the condition of that vast and ever-increasing class of our fellow-beings. Living, as many of them do, in such a condition of wretchedness and

poverty that even the most uncivilized tribes in heathendom would not, if they knew it, exchange places with them, they are none the less our near—very near—almost next-door neighbours; and however far removed from us in the social declension, are still our Briton-born brothers and sisters.

The larger proportion of the population of this country, as, we fear, in many countries, is composed of the working and poorer classes, who somehow seem to increase in ratio to the depth of their poverty and social misery. The lower one looks *down* the social ladder, the denser and darker seems the mass of humanity. The elements forming what is called the community may not inaptly be likened to the structure of a large and, if you care, imposing structure, say a church or cathedral, the rougher and grosser materials of which are massed solidly and compactly deep down in the darkness of

the foundations; while the higher the building rises out into the healthier and clearer atmosphere of the day, there stand forth the ornamental turrets and towers carved out, so to speak, of the finer and costlier granite.

If there is one feature or characteristic of the age more pronounced than another, it is that of the contrast which prevails between class and class. If, on the one hand, there never was an age of greater wealth and luxury than the present, when, indeed, it has almost become the fashion in some countries—at any rate, it is rapidly becoming so—for men to be millionnaires—the Dives of the nineteenth century to whom their great prototype would be, were he extant, unworthy in many ways to hold so much as a candle—then, on the other hand, no age in human history ever exhibited, and in so many forms, more wholesale misery, poverty, and starvation. The thought occurs—Is the

latter the product of the former, and are both the outcome of our boasted civilization? These are great and far-reaching questions which, indeed, have never been fully or satisfactorily answered. The fact, however, that both suggest, if not form, a condition of our modern life, indicating that society is divided into two great factions or camps of men and women, the one class blessed with a seeming superabundance of the necessities of life, the other class cursed—as it is reckoned—with a lamentable lack of the same, accounts no doubt for much, if not all, of that restlessness, wistfulness, wantonness of spirit which, under the name of Socialism, is beginning to permeate and leaven a wonderfully wide area of the body politic. Of course, as in the individual so in the society, hunger or misery makes men desperate and wanton, especially when the reek and savour of a most palpable feast, to which an unkind fate has forcibly denied

them admission, provokes their very nostrils.

Does not this state apply to the two classes referred to? And could the parable of Dives and Lazarus, as spoken nearly nineteen hundred years ago, have been more apropos then, or at any time since, than it is now? Scarcely. The parable, for that matter, and for all practical purposes, might have been spoken but yesterday, word for word as Christ spake it, and been as applicable too; only, however, with but this difference, that the new Lazarus, instead of being permitted to crouch full of sores as the old Lazarus did at Dives' door, would have been relegated most speedily to the workhouse or hospital. *Here*, at all events—let men cavil as they may—stands out, erect and distinguished, amid these contrasted conditions of modern life, one genuine and substantial—albeit parochial—sign of our civilization!

* * * *

Had Hood written nothing more than his terribly powerful 'Song of the Shirt,' he was in all respects entitled to undying gratitude — an excellent but oftentimes, alas! a most unsubstantial sentiment. Be that as it may, however, the pitiful revelations of which the poet's 'song' was the burthen, shocked and startled at the time the heart of civilized England, which, to do it justice, throbbed indignantly to think that there were not men but women permitted to work, and that forsooth not to live but actually to starve!

'Sewing a shroud as well as a shirt:' that was about it—the best and the worst. And if that ghastly mockery of civilization made our fathers and mothers shudder with indignation then, how are we to confront it to-day, and with what feelings can we contemplate it, existing as the evil does in our midst, if anything more intensified and wider spread? For Hood's sempstress

was, in a sense, well-off compared with some poor wretches who, to-day, are engaged in what may be fairly termed starvation work. Take, for instance, those persons—female, of course—employed in the making of canvas trousers for sailors. It has been ascertained that women working twelve hours per day for six days of the week, may each earn from 6s. to 7s. a week! To do so, however, they must work very hard; and besides, must furnish their own needles and thread. Makers of boys' caps, men's rough pilot coats, the 'uppers' of carpet slippers; lucifer-match or match-box makers; makers of skewers for dogs' and cats' meat—these are a few examples where the remuneration for the work done is positively disgraceful, the wonder being that anyone should undertake the slavery of it on such starvation terms as the employers make. Yet there is actually so great an amount of competition for such employment to earn

such beggarly wages, that, it is believed, even these it were an easy matter to reduce to the lowest possible point—a fraction more than nothing at all—and yet at that wage there would be crowds eager to do the work, and without a murmur.

THE PROVIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE.

ALTHOUGH of great interest and importance at all times, and worthy of the never-ceasing attention of every class of the community, the subject of thrift, or the providence of the people, is one which, whether considered in a national or an individual sense, never, perhaps, appealed for attention more opportunely than now. And any trustworthy testimony of the existence of this most valuable and necessary element in our national or individual life, must be a source of genuine gratification both on account of what has been achieved in the past, and of the prospect of possibilities that may yet be attained.

For if in twenty-five years three and a half millions of the people of this country have actually saved, against the proverbial rainy day, nearly fifty millions sterling by means of a system which has been scarcely a quarter of a century in existence, and which has not yet attained to anything like its full maturity and working capabilities, what may they not save, taking times as at the present average, say, in the next twenty-five or thirty years? The saving of this vast sum of money, giving an average of about fourteen pounds to each of the three and a half millions of depositors—or about twenty-five shillings apiece to every man, woman, and child in the three kingdoms—is in effect what has been accomplished by the establishment, by Act of Parliament in 1861, of that beneficent and now colossal institution known as the Post Office Savings Bank, at present in its twenty-fifth year of existence.

It may fairly be said—the fact has, indeed, been otherwise acknowledged—that the entire nation is under a great obligation to the deviser or devisers of this unique and splendid school of popular, practical thrift. It is, at all events, to one gentleman in particular to whom the credit belongs of advocating, on strictly prudential bases, the planning and formation of what are known throughout the length and breadth of the land as Post Office Savings Banks. In the year 1859, Mr. (now Sir Christopher) Sykes addressed a letter on this important subject to Mr. Gladstone, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer for the first time. That now historical letter, leading as it did to such extraordinary results, contained in the main a statement urging the adoption, without the incurring of any State expense, of a new system of popular savings banks, to be in certain of its features not unlike the already existing sister system of the old or Trustee

Banks for saving, whose introduction, in many cases, dated as far back as seventy years ago. While those older banks were doing much, though restricted, good to the community in their own quiet way, it was felt, as it was distinctly shown, by Mr. Sykes, whose banking experience entitled him to considerable authority on the subject, that something more was urgently wanted to extend and popularize the advantages of saving money, especially among the wage-earning classes of the people. For instance, it was shown how, while in 1846 the aggregate receipts of all the savings banks were £7,300,367, in 1858 there was only some £600,000 more—an increase of 7½ per cent. in a period of twelve years. While other causes, at the time in question, so far accounted for this poor advance in the operations of a dozen years, it was emphatically declared that it was not so much the want of money to be saved that brought about the unsatisfactory result, as the

want of adequate means of receiving savings. Indeed, there were then no less than fifteen counties, or, as the writer graphically put it, 'nearly two thousand towns throughout the Kingdom, through the streets of which their artisans and labourers might traverse without meeting with a savings bank!' Happily, that is all changed. Mr. Gladstone, and those then with him in the Government, at once appreciated the necessity of providing the means of 'helping the poor to help themselves,' by the inauguration of a popular system of savings banks which would be strictly self-supporting, and at the same time of incalculable advantage to the great body of the public, especially to that portion of it for whose benefit the system was devised. In 1861, therefore, or scarcely two years from the date of Mr. Sykes' appeal to Mr. Gladstone, the system of Post Office Savings Banks was constitutionally established, and the present year is thus the twenty-fifth year

of its existence — an existence the vitality of which appears, humanly speaking, to be well-nigh inextinguishable, and having possibilities it would be vain to estimate.

Few Blue Books are more interesting than that dealing with the Post Office and the various branches of its business; and while each department under the control of the Postmaster-General has its own especial interest, that of the Savings Banks is certainly not the least instructive. A few facts relative to the providence of the people, as set forth by the Postmaster-General, may not, therefore, be inappropriate at the present time, seeing, as has been pointed out, they have just entered upon a fresh page in their career. Commencing business on the 9th of September, 1861, no fewer than 2,535 savings banks, under the direct control of the Postmaster-General, were in active operation by the end of the following year. That these banks, so simple and

convenient in their *modus operandi*, at once commended themselves to the patronage of the public was well assured by the fact that, in the short space referred to, there were received no fewer than 639,216 deposits, varying from one shilling to £30, amounting in all to £2,114,669, equal to, in round numbers, about £140,000 per month. In the same period there were 97,294 repayments, representing the sum of £438,637—the whole business, as on the 31st December, 1862, resulting in a balance of £1,698,221 remaining at the credit of 178,495 depositors, having an average investment of about £9 10s. each. That, surely, was a highly satisfactory beginning, and one that augured well for the future of the system, whose steady development since 1861 has amply proved the necessity for its general establishment throughout the country, foreseen by the wisdom of such men as Sir Christopher Sykes and Mr. Gladstone. At the end of last year

the number of deposits received by the Post Office Savings Banks of the United Kingdom since the beginning was, stated roundly, a little over seventy millions, the amount of the same reaching the enormous sum of one hundred and seventy-five millions sterling, or about three million deposits representing seven and a half millions sterling annually. As already stated, the number of these banks was in 1861 between two and three thousand; they number now nearly eight thousand; and it is surely a very out-of-the-way place indeed, from Land's End to John o' Groat's, where this splendid thrift-agency does not exist. It was only to be expected, therefore, that, on their universal establishment being as far as possible accomplished, so many persons should avail themselves of such means of acquiring habits of economy and providence. The vast sums deposited from year to year, and the balance which now stands at their credit, prove

that they have not, comparatively speaking, neglected the opportunity so afforded them. And if to these significant results there be added those represented by the returns of the National Debt Commissioners setting forth what has been accomplished by means of the old, or Trustee Savings Banks, which, on the 20th November of last year, held for a million and a half depositors no less than a capital sum of over forty-five millions sterling, it cannot for a moment be doubted that the people of this country, and chiefly those of them who are commonly described as belonging to the working or wage-earning classes, are making an honest effort—although there is still great need for increasing it—to provide against the many necessities of life.

Any consideration of this subject would be incomplete without some brief reference to what has been done by similar agencies in the colonies and

elsewhere. And already a very fair effort has been made to engraft this excellent savings bank system in the body politic of all British dependencies. For instance, in the seven Australasian colonies there were on 30th June, 1883, as many as 365,828 depositors in general and Post Office Savings Banks, having at credit £10,304,144, or an average of £28 apiece. This, too, augurs happily for the future of those of our kin beyond the seas, who have made so good, so substantial a beginning in the practice of thrift and economy. It is to be borne in mind, however, as the Postmaster-General points out in that part of his report bearing on the subject, that thrift is practised at the Antipodes not only by accumulations in the savings banks if, as it is averred, 'no less than three-fourths of the mechanics of Melbourne own the houses they live in.' In Canada, also, the rapid increase of Post Office Savings Bank business is being main-

tained, the number of open accounts on the 30th June, 1884, being between sixty and seventy thousand, representing a sum at credit of $13,245,552, or £2,649,110 sterling.

In Austria, France, Belgium, and Italy the Postal Savings Banks are supplying a real want, and in some instances exceeding all expectations. In the former country it is stated that their success has been very remarkable, due in a great measure to the fact that 'the banks were framed on the English system, as the simplest and most natural *(einfachsten und natürlichsten)*.' With such a grand idea as this of thrift, or providence, permeating the mind of the people of those great nations of Europe, and surely destined sooner or later to spread to other nations that have not yet received it, for reasons that need not be alluded to here, savings banks are, it will be seen, doing a great work, and have already, in a way that people may not often

think of, constituted themselves potent factors in accomplishing much good of a most substantial and enduring kind. All honour to the brain that conceived, and the statesmanship that contrived and established, the magnificent plan or system of Post Office Savings Banks, and on such a basis, too, that few persons, comparatively, are so poor that they cannot some time or other in their lives become investors, and thereby enjoy a share of the benefits to be obtained.

No more hopeful sign of better times for all can be imagined than what is foreshadowed in the annual returns of the thrift of that class commonly, but unfairly, called the 'working class,' as given forth by the savings banks throughout the country. Had the banks only been instituted a century sooner, how different might have been the condition of the great population of the empire; how much more temperate

and independent to-day! Still, we should be grateful for them now in our midst; and the facilities for saving money which they offer to the very poorest and humblest working man, woman, boy or girl are such that there should be no excuse whatever for poverty by those who are able to earn a weekly or daily wage, however small.

The more savings banks in the kingdom the fewer dramshops, workhouses, and ignominious graves.

Were clergymen to preach to the people more about thrift and personal independence and their attendant virtues, and give where they can some practical expositions of the glorious principles of this blessing, assuredly there would be more smiling, happy faces among men and women than there are.

Working men, whether you be plough-

men, quarrymen, coachmen, carpenters, dustmen, or constables; working, toiling women, whether you stand behind the counter in a shop, or are in service, or only 'go out' and toil at a tub, or wash floors—know, prize this truth—prize it none the less because it don't happen to be paraphrased in 'sacred writ'—the way, the only true, PRACTICAL way to comfort, health, independence, happiness, and a green old age is through the door of the savings bank. Get but your foot on the step with one shilling in your palm, and your journey thitherward, *if you like*, is begun. This is true, and has been testified by thousands.

A WORD FOR THE 'BLUE-BOOKS.'

To most people the mere suggestion of the term 'Blue-Books' is at once depressing and dismaying. To them the phrase is simply synonymous with all that is tedious, bewildering, multitudinous; for what does a 'Blue-Book'

seem but a very wilderness of, apparently, barren, uninteresting figures, with not so much as a ray of colouring to illumine them in their bald, illimitable inkiness? There they confront the eye, line upon line, row crowding thick and fast on row, column by column, page after page, throughout the bulky, ungainly tome—a terrible crowd indeed, pitiful in its plainness, and melancholy in its uncompromising, hopeless monotony, which even the very covering of the book helps somehow to deepen and intensify! What a mental treadmilling were surely involved in the unimaginable processes of arraying and arranging the vast conglomerate mass of fact a 'Blue-Book' contains. By the way, might not the compilation of, say, the national census be made a kind of capital punishment for a certain large class of evildoers capable of doing the drudgery? Were such a punishment meted out to the many heartless swindlers who prey on their innocent,

weak, and confiding fellow-creatures, we venture to think that in a generation there would be a great improvement in some ugly 'points' in the social morals of a large class of the community, besides the accruing of a great saving to the finances of the country. At all events, teasing oakum, making canvas bags, or even breaking stones, must surely be mere pastime and play to the labour and worry involved in the preparation of a national census, when issued in the form of what is commonly called the 'Blue-Books.'

After all, a 'Blue-Book' is not a novel, although it is not unfrequently issued after the orthodox fashion of the novel, *i.e.*, in three volumes. Nor is it a play, although, moreover, it is in a sense a drama wherein every man, woman, and child, individually but

> 'Ciphers in the great account,'

figures as a player. No, a 'Blue-Book' is nothing more than what it is, and

what its authors meant it to be—a compilation of plain, unvarnished facts—facts, whether of a social, industrial, political or other kind, expressed in the main by figures; a history, so to speak, in figures (taking the 'Blue-Books' of the census as an example) of the people of a nation or country; their numbers, their ages, their employments, and other vital statistics regarding them, at a given time.

Such a volume, therefore, can hardly be said, in a reading sense, to be a popular one: and the requiring to issue (if it were possible to conceive of such a thing) of a second edition of a 'Blue-Book' would, doubtless, be as great a wonder and surprise to those officials who had to do with its original compilation, as would be the necessity for preparing another edition of their poems by any of the thousand-and-one fourth-rate poetasters who afflict with their rhymes the patience of the present generation! Apart, however, from their

primary and permanent value as public records containing these fundamental facts, the 'Blue-Books,' while issued chiefly for the use and benefit of members of Parliament, journalists, statisticians, and others, contain in their pages a vast array of facts which ought to interest a great many people besides.

For instance, to the historian the 'Blue-Books' are, of course, invaluable: his work would be fatally incomplete without the essence of such facts relative to the national well-being which the 'Blue-Books,' in comparatively the most accurate and concise manner, are alone capable of supplying him with. For the social reformer, they contain the information which is absolutely necessary for him to know in carrying on his work of reform; and they tell him at once and precisely the numerical strength or weakness of the social forces severally working for and aiding or retarding his efforts of amelioration. To the journalist they comprise a veritable

stock-in-trade of valuable facts — are almost, indeed, his *vade mecum*, without the assistance of which his severe and arduous work would be rendered infinitely more so. Indeed, it is to the journalist, perhaps most of all men, to whom the 'Blue-Books' are, for the handy facts their pages contain, most necessary and useful. As powder—if not both powder and shot — to the soldier, they serve as ink to the pen of the journalist, who would find, doubtlessly, that without the solid and ready-to-hand help of the 'Blue-Books,' the task of addressing himself to the public by means of the mouthpiece of the press would be vastly more severe than it is. To the economist, too, the 'Blue-Books' readily serve as charts or indexes of the progress and prosperity, or otherwise, of a people. To the clergyman, even, they should likewise be of much use and benefit, for with so many interesting social facts at his hand, if he only be at the trouble to lift them, surely it

were an easy matter for him to 'point a moral,' if not 'to adorn a tale.' To the employer, also, they convey not a few important lessons valuable alike to himself and, for that matter, to those in his employ, statistics of labour having a common interest for both. But while, perhaps, this list includes nearly, if not all, those persons who know, or at any rate ought to know, something of the intrinsic value of the 'Blue-Books,' anyone besides who, though finding the perusal of a great array of figures as there presented anything but charming or exciting, would nevertheless care to cultivate the faculty of *reading between the lines*, and discerning (so to speak) in the wholesale truths which, glad or sad, bright or dark, throng their pages, would most assuredly be amply rewarded for his trouble. And although the result to some might not be unlike the experience of the country fellow who, having been confined for a time in the gaol of his native town,

where a copy of Johnson's Dictionary constituted the entire library, was on his release asked by some one what he thought of the book, gave as his answer that it was '*a gey interesting buik, but the stories were a' jist a wee short;*' still, to many others the experience of an occasional dip into the deep ocean of the 'Blue-Books' would be proved to be as substantially profitable as, at any rate, the reading of many a modern novel. For anyone, however, to say, without having tried the experiment, that to study the pages of such ungainly and uninviting-looking volumes, as externally the 'Blue-Books' appear to be, is only to waste the time and weary the patience, is surely to confess one's self as being in a state of positive mental purblindness. Let the reader try it when the first opportunity presents itself, and we venture to affirm he will add not a little to his wisdom and much to his knowledge.

INVENTIONS.

WHAT a marvellous age is ours compared with that, say, of a century ago, in the matter of inventiveness. Even within the period of half a century, the extraordinary achievements of the constructiveness and ingenuity of men, as witnessed in their many and miraculous contrivances are enough, sometimes, to take one's breath away in contemplating them. To enumerate a few of them: The perfection of the locomotive, and the now world-traversing steamship, the telegraph, the telephone, the audiphone, the sewing-machine, the photograph, chromo-lithographic printing, the cylinder printing press, the elevator for hotels and other many-storied buildings, the cotton gin and the spinning jenny, the reaper and mower, the steam thresher, the steam fire-engine, the improved process for making steel, the application of chloroform and ether to destroy sensibility in

painful surgery cases, and so on through a long catalogue. Nor are we yet done in the field of invention and discovery. The application of coal gas and petroleum to heating and cooking operations is only trembling on, if it has not already got over, the verge of successful experiment; the introduction of steam from a great central reservoir to general use for heating and cooking is foreshadowed as among the coming events; the artificial production of butter has already created consternation among dairymen; the navigation of the air by some device akin to our present balloon would also seem to be prefigured, and the propulsion of machinery by electricity is even now clearly indicated by the march of experiment. There are some problems we have hitherto deemed impossible, but are the mysteries of even the most improbable of them more subtle to grasp than that of the ocean cable or that of the photograph or the telephone? We talk by cable with an

ocean rolling between; we speak in our own voices to friends a hundred miles or more from where we articulate before the microphone. Under the blazing sun of July we produce ice by chemical means, rivalling the most solid and crystalline production of nature. Our surgeons graft the skin from one person's arm to the face of another, and it adheres and becomes an integral portion of his body. We make a mile of white printing paper and send it on a spool that a perfecting printing press unwinds and prints, and delivers to you, folded and counted, many thousands per hour. Of a verity this is the age of invention, nor has the world reached a stopping-place yet.

In Great Britain there are, on an average, three new inventions or improvements on inventions already made, given forth to the world on each day of the year. At a moderate estimate, then, supposing there are, throughout the whole civilized world, about a dozen

new inventions made *per diem*, is it not amazing, overwhelming to ponder what vast strides the inventiveness of man will, in all human probability, have made a century hence? And yet it is to be feared that men and women will have to toil and sweat much as they do now, and just as they have ever done since the edict first went forth to all the seed of Adam—'By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread.' Why, the very act and process of invention, from its conception in the brain to its consummation in the workshop, so causes and creates a demand for the labour of men as to justify the inevitableness of this seeming immortal truth.

The invention within recent years of the sewing machine has proved an incalculable boon to tens of thousands of our fair working sisters. The man or men who had to do with conceiving it (all honour to our Singers, and Howes, and Wheelers! where are

their monuments? in many a thankful heart, doubtless!) and bringing it to its present highly efficient state, whereby the deft-fingered toilers of the seam find their work more bearable and less distressing, ought to stand in the world's estimation head and shoulders above your patriot, poet, or preacher-benefactor. He is the best philanthropist, that man who brought relief! For he has made toil *tolerable* to suffering thousands of womankind who before often sewed themselves, as Hood so pathetically and truthfully put it, 'a shroud as well as a shirt.' A patriot, or a poet, or a preacher may talk of relief, or sing or preach about it; but this man brings it, has, in fact, brought it, and so there are fewer—many, many fewer—aching fingers, and brows, and hearts to-day with our poor hard-working sewers. And yet, one often wonders, how often do they think (perhaps they have no time to!), as they work their machine and tread, tread, tread away,

while it makes its blithe, whirring noise, of the worthy man who contrived it? All honour to him!

Whoever invents something useful, something that will lessen labour and make it more easy of accomplishment, is the truest and most practical benefactor of his race. Compared with him, the man who, say, writes an epic or a tragedy or a novel, is just like what a gilded moth is to a working bee—there is a glitter, a sudden flash of the gaudy wings, and, lo! he and his work are not; but the labour of the bee is marketable and recompensing.

AN AGE OF PROGRESS.

THE age is assuredly an age of progress; there is no denying *that!* In some things, many things, perhaps, there may be regress—a backsliding, while many things more may be in a stationary, unmoving condition, giving no apparent

indication of advancement or otherwise; but, generally, the movements of the world, of mankind, whether viewed in their social or industrial aspects, are movements *forward*, and to this fact each successive decade bears undoubted testimony.

First of all, and most substantially, the industries of the world clearly indicate a state of decided progress. In this matter there never was a time in the history of mankind when, so to speak, the business of the world was more prosperous than to-day, when almost every nation under the sun engages in profitable traffic, and buys and sells from each other. Taking Christendom as the scope or limit of our view, we find that in commerce, manufacture, mining, agriculture, carrying trade, and banking—the six chief industries which, so far, may be said to make up the sum of human labour—there was an increase in these affairs during the last decade

(1870-80) of 22¼ per cent. Then the financial condition of mankind is another remarkable feature in the improvement of the world. In this period the earnings of mankind have risen *twice* in ratio to population. Here are the figures. In 1870, the population of Christendom was, roundly stated, 375,000,000; their net earnings £4,858,000,000, which gave an average of £12 15s. earnings per head; while ten years later we find that when the population numbered 411,000,000 and the net earnings £5,802,000,000, the average earnings rose to £13 15s. per head, or £1 per head more. As far as money can demonstrate, these figures help to indicate how much the financial condition of the world has improved during a period of ten years; and there can be no doubt that if the labour of mankind never earned more before than what it earns to-day, we may safely imply that the business of the world never at any other time so

engrossed the minds and energies of all who live and move in it.

Again, take the railways. The world to-day is traversed by nearly 250,000 miles of railway; in 1880 the figures were 222,000; in 1870, 122,000. And there was spent during the decade in making the increase to this vast 'way-going' no less than 1,759 millions of money. In a century hence, if this rate of speed is to be maintained, not a desert in Arabia, not a jungle in India, not a steppe or waste place in Russia, but will be traversed by this potent civilizer, the steam-engine—one of the mightiest means which has yet been created to bring about that great desideratum, peace and goodwill to all the nations.

This advance is likewise very notably seen in the increase of telegraphs since 1870. Electricity! What a marvellous invention, and fraught with so much unspeakable good to mankind! Was it not something of the spirit of prophecy that illumined Shakespeare's soul when,

three hundred years ago, he made one of the genii of his invention say that he would 'put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes'? Whether or not, the time is assuredly fast approaching when that which in the poet's imagination seemed but the most unsubstantial phantasy, shall be soon realized as one of the most thrilling palpable truths extant, and the 'girdle round about the earth' a simple, prosaic fact in life. Already this girdle has well-nigh encompassed the full circle of this compact earth, and the day is not far distant when this 'nervous system' (as it has not inappropriately been called) of the earth's constitution will have been stretched from zone to zone, and one of the greatest inventions mankind ever witnessed, as assuredly it is one of mankind's greatest blessings, extended to the very uttermost places.

In 1870, there were no less than 277,650 miles of land-wires laid throughout Christendom, and 46,000 miles of

ocean-cables; in all 323,650 miles of telegraph. In 1880, the figures were 506,510 of the former, and 97,500 of the latter; in all 604,010—nearly 100 per cent. of an increase. That the necessity for this vast increase was real and substantial, it is only left to say that the number of messages flashed through this stupendous network rose from 64,000,000 in 1870 to 141,000,000 in 1880, or from fourteen to thirty-one messages per every hundred inhabitants in Christendom.

But were it by any means possible to obtain a general expression of opinion as to what constitutes the most remarkable feature of the progress of the age in which we live, in all probability the unanimous voice of the people would declare in favour of education. Nor would such a verdict be a false or an unfair one. For, surely, if this moral motor, education, be not the very greatest, it is at any rate one of the

greatest agencies by which such progress has been accomplished in the past, and is every day being yet more and more accelerated. And when the many and beneficent results, observable everywhere, which have been already obtained from its direct influence, are for a moment seriously considered, surely there can be no question that the spread of education among the masses of the people constitutes, in its far-reaching effects upon their welfare, one of the most auspicious 'signs of the times' which the present century has witnessed.

Not so very many years ago education, as generally apprehended to-day, was considered a luxury to be enjoyed only by the favoured few; now it is, comparatively speaking, one of the commonest commodities of modern times, and may be obtained almost for the mere asking, so to speak, by the very poorest and meanest in the land. Indeed, its necessity for the individual, as a member of

the civil community, receives, perhaps, in no other way more signal acknowledgment than from the fact that neglect in a parent or guardian to supply it in ordinary circumstances to the child is equivalent to a misdemeanour, deserving no inconsiderable punishment. In the life of a nation exhibiting such great mental and material activity as Great Britain, even a period of twenty years is perhaps not too great a span of time by which to measure results that have accrued therefrom. As to education, at all events, the results of the past decade or two are such as to prove, in the national well-being, that its mental activity is in nowise relaxed, but is rather—and a good deal has been made of the point—being submitted to pressure; and in a certain and important sense, no better proof of this could be adduced than in the vast numbers of the rising generation engaged from day to day, from session to session, and from year to year, in working at school pre-

paratory to enacting their part in the more serious business of life.

ON CHOOSING AN OCCUPATION.

PROBABLY no condition of life is more exasperating than that in which a youth finds himself when, just entering upon the great arena of the world, he stands hesitant and undecided as to the part he shall play—as to the occupation or profession to be adopted whereby he may earn his daily bread, and so perform his part in the world's work. What shall he be? or, rather, what can he be? Aye! there's the rub. For, unless his mental bias or inclination be very decided, which, generally speaking, becomes apparent in the average youth before he quits his teens, it must surely be a grievous misfortune when neither this, that, nor the other profession or occupation offers sufficient inducement to him to undertake its learning, with, of course, the view to its life-adoption as the means whereby he may be en-

abled to serve his own day and generation. This, to be sure, refers to the youth dependent entirely, or for the most part at any rate, on his own resources, neither having been born to a squiredom, nor to a baronetcy, nor to a prospective peerage with substantial thousands a year to justify the honourable position. But even granting him to be fairly born, bred and educated, in all points well-equipped for the battle of life that lies before him, yet without any special social advantage in the matter of birth or fortune, how pitiful indeed must be that young man's condition when lifting up, as it were, his eyes for the first time, he stands gazing from the threshold of his career,

'Mute as with a wild surprise,'

out into that tumultuous wilderness which we tamely call Life, not knowing how or whither to venture! There is no crisis in his history so serious as this, no occasion when he

requires the best and wisest counsel of those competent to give it. True, he may have already been brought under some special influence in the matter of choosing his life-profession. His father, for instance, may be a clergyman, or a lawyer, or a soldier; then he, the son, meekly emulates him in the first case, or acquires the legal faculty in the second, or is, perhaps, fired by the martial spirit as in the third; *i.e.*, he decides on entering within the gateway of this work-a-day world to learn to preach in a pulpit, or plead at the bar, or fight for his country, simply because it happened his father did so before him, and therefore he, too, must needs follow in his steps.

Thousands of young men everywhere, as everybody knows, adopt this plan, and, naturally, with obviously varying results. But it by no means follows that all should do so; indeed, it is often wiser that (at all events, in very many instances), however desirable it may be

that we should inherit many of our fathers' 'pairts,' we should not, in addition, seek to follow in their footsteps so far as the kind of life's work is concerned. This hereditary system might have answered, and did answer, very well for a state of socitey existing, perhaps, a century ago or even less, when the variety and number of occupations were not a tithe of what they are to-day. Then it was almost necessary for the son to follow the sire in the choice of his calling, if 'choice' it could be termed; but now, when new sources of work and labour are being opened up daily, when indeed scarcely a day goes by without some new invention being brought forth to the world and thus substantially ever adding to the variety of occupations, this necessity is to a great extent removed. So abundant has the choice of occupations become within the past few decades, that a new difficulty is now being encountered by many young persons beginning life.

But, given such a choice to any ordinary youth, the most careful regard should be paid when a particular course of life is decided upon that, granting of course the educational or practical requirements are, so far, provided for, he ought to be as far as possible physically fit for the work involved, and have, at the same time, a distinct personal taste for, or mental bias towards, the same. It is, however, absurd to expect all youths to have all the necessary equipments for the especial work of life for which it may be proposed they should adapt themselves. A little care and forethought in this matter on the part of parents, guardians and teachers, would, nevertheless, often prevent many serious blunders characterizing, as they often do, the lives of many men who might have done their day and generation some substantial services, but for the fact that they had been injudiciously and unhappily advised at the outset of their careers.

AN HONOURABLE ASPIRATION.

THE highest and, perhaps, most serviceable kind of work to which men of education may legitimately aspire, is that of the politician or the statesman. But then a man, no matter how splendid or surpassing his powers be, must have, *as a rule*, certain peculiar social advantages before he can, with the best credit to himself, as well as for the benefit of those whom he aspires to represent at Parliament, attempt to obtain a seat in that great and honourable Synod of the people's suffrages.

Seldom it is that a constituency elects to this high position the man of brain or culture, *per se;* indeed, as a pretty general rule, experience points the other way. And even in these days of equality, the man of social influence and power, who is usually gauged by the extent and value of what he possesses, or by the influence of, perhaps, family distinction, has infinitely greater chances to be

chosen for the honours of Parliament than the man who lacks the social desideratum. This, of course, is perhaps the best, and, in the circumstances of the day, the wisest course to adopt in electing members to represent the constituencies throughout the kingdom; but if some of the men of real strength and force of brain, who, not having the social 'open sesame,' are contented simply to fill, say a professorial chair in some of our Universities, or to occupy a pulpit in an obscure parish, were occasionally to be sent up to St. James's, there to give the country the benefit of the strength that is in them, what a happier, wiser, and wealthier nation Great Britain would be. As it is, a large proportion of the Parliamentary representatives of the people of this country is composed of worthy provosts, mayors and aldermen who, having honourably attained the highest civic dignities within their reach, seek yet a wider field for their serviceableness; and

so a seat in the House, and nothing less, can alone gratify their ambition. Occasionally, to be sure, such members are known to do yeoman service to those whom they represent, and indeed are perhaps in certain circumstances the best men to be sent to Westminster; but, on the whole, their voices are better adapted for crying up or down some petty local grievance within the boundary of their municipality, than in attempting a noise in the Senate concerning the affairs of the nation.

Why should there not be a University, or some such place, where young men of good birth, education, and all the rest of it, could be trained for this truly noble service? What a benefit it it would be to the country; how much of its money, its time, its patience would be saved, were it not for the prevailing custom of electing a member haphazard who has had no training whatever for the high calling to which he is chosen,

but has obtained notoriety simply because he happens to be a millionnaire, or has married a lady of title, or has been dubbed a knight on the occasion of a visit from a gracious royalty to his neighbourhood.

HEALTH AND OCCUPATION.

WHEN a man or woman chooses an occupation, that is to say, if he or she should have the option of choosing, attention is very seldom paid to the fact of its being a healthy or an unhealthy one. This consideration is seldom entertained: the question with most people is chiefly—Is the occupation or profession a paying one? This, of course, is only natural. If it will pay, never mind the risks—let us face them! But, in the ordinary course of things, people, as a rule, very seldom have the choice of a profession or occupation offered to them, because when they begin life they are generally

too young to consider such a matter as the healthiness or unhealthiness of the work they are about to begin to learn; and, being young and strong, have surely no right or reason to protest or say one word about it, and, to be sure, this is as it ought to be. How absurd it would be to warn a youth about to begin, for instance, the study of the medical profession that he is entering on a physically hazardous career; or to advise some young fellow —a stout country yokel, perhaps, who comes up to town to be a butcher, for any sake to give up the idea of choosing such an occupation because statisticians have proved it to be one highly prejudicial to long life! Why, this would be the very height of absurdity. And were such a consideration to enter into the estimate of all who are about to commence a business career, what a state of topsy-turvydom would there be.

No; the great point is this—that

where a man finds that to earn his bread, be it in an occupation that is unhealthy and prejudicial to old age, and cannot make a better of it, he must so order his life that it will in a measure compensate the disadvantage; that is to say, if he be a student or a scribe, he must straighten by exercise the back he bends at his desk by necessity. If, say, he be a publican, he must himself beware of, and avoid, that which he retails to others. If a butcher, he must do all he can to guard against the risks and dangers and temptations of his trade; and so on. These are examples where sanitary law has no opportunity; it cannot legally enforce the student from his volume, or the clerk from his ledger, or by law prohibit the publican from serving his thirsty customers. The individual must here sanitate himself; and if he fails or neglects to do so, then nobody is responsible for the result of that neglect. Many other cases in point will occur to the reader; but these

will serve for examples to show that when a worker finds himself, by what is called 'force of circumstances,' in an occupation detrimental to the interests of good health, he must so order his life and extraneous opportunities as, in some measure, will compensate to him the disadvantage at which he unfortunately finds himself.

There can be no doubt, however, of the fact that a great many so-called unhealthy occupations might be made much less unhealthy and prejudicial to human life and well-being than they are; and though recent legislation has done and is doing much to improve the condition of affairs in our great factories and workshops, mines, etc., a vast amount of mischief to the health of the community is being done every hour of the day by the neglect or non-performance of a few simple ready-to-hand hygienic principles. And until both employers and employés individually and collectively move themselves in the

matter, and second the efforts of the authorities to improve those unhealthy conditions under which they suffer, sometimes—as in the case of the poor miners—very severely, no amount of legislation will ever benefit them by one iota.

All occupations are more or less risky and unhealthy, and in following them men are bound to 'wear' somehow—'we are all mortal'—no matter what the calling be; but it is the 'tear' more than the 'wear' that is to be avoided.

Taking one or two of the professions, we find, as we have briefly pointed out, in another chapter, that the—

Medical profession is, as a rule, prejudicial to long life, although the names of not a few eminent men will suggest themselves to the reader as examples where the evidence of this fact can be rebutted.

Physicians and surgeons from youth up to the age of forty-five experience a

mortality much above the average; after that age they do not approach the priesthood in health, but differ little from the average. Many young practitioners have hard struggles to encounter. They are in contact with the sick, are exposed to zymotic diseases, and their rest is disturbed. In states of depression, deadly poisons are at hand. There is an excess of practitioners. Country practitioners have to visit their patients in all weathers, at all hours. The causes from which the medical men suffer demand careful study.

The clergy.—This body of workers seems, according to the late Dr. Farr, to be exempt, in a measure, from the troubles and dangers from which their medical brethren suffer. Dr. Farr says, 'Protestant ministers and Catholic priests all experience low rates of mortality from ages twenty-five to forty-five. The clergy lead a comfortable, temperate, domestic, moral life in generally healthy parsonages, and their

lives are good in the *insurance* sense, which is, to be sure, a proper sense to judge by. The young curate, compared with the young doctor, has less cares.'

The mortality of Catholic priests after the age of fifty-five is high; perhaps the effects of celibacy are then felt.

In the last statement there is a note of warning, or at least a hint, which all young clergymen would do well to heed, if they want to live long and healthily. Generally, however, in this matter they do not need it, as they are found to be a much-marrying fraternity, and contribute, in no insignificant measure, to swell the ever-increasing numbers of the community.

The profession of the solicitor and lawyer is proved to be a hazardous one, the full average mortality among legal men being experienced after the age of 35. Neither the barrister nor advocate is, however, included, as those higher

representatives of the law generally have longer periods for resting and holiday than the rank and file of the profession who are supposed by an ever-exigent public to be always in harness and ready to 'execute' for them. That the profession of an advocate or judge is one conducive to long life is also proved by the very large number of them who attain to great ages. This applies as much, for instance, to Scottish as to English judges, the members of the Scottish Bench being, as a rule, exceptionally long lived. Indeed, this has always been a remarkable fact; for in former times we find that those 'bright luminaries' of the Scottish Bench—living though they did in the narrow and, one would imagine, unwholesome closes and wynds adjacent to the scene of their labours, and fond, unduly fond as they were supposed to be, of amicable, if not dignified, conviviality—yet they lived generally to the orthodox age

beyond whose bourne very few men pass, while not a few of them actually had the bad grace to become octogenarians, and, if the truth must be told, one was so undignified as to endure till past his 90th year!

The farmers and agricultural labourers are among the healthiest of the population, classified according to occupation.

Fresh air, free, precious, heavenly! That is the secret of the farmer's long lease of life. His milk, his vegetables and his beef undoubtedly must have something to do with his fresh complexion, substantial proportion and enviable vigour; but, depend upon it, it is three-fourths nature's food—fresh air—that makes of the farmer the man *(primo homo)* that he is! Man was naturally made to live in the open air—is, in truth, an open-air animal. When God made the earth, He made no houses; but He planned it for man after a splendid, mighty, mag-

nificent fashion—fields for his floor, mountains for his walls, the broad, glorious sky for his roof, and the sun to light it all! But man, being of a cowering nature, shrank in, as it were, from this divine openness and liberty, and in the degeneracy of his nature built himself a hut, and then a house, wherein to hide himself from the light of God and the liberty of day!

Again, the most natural *living and working* man is the farmer. His living is natural because his working is so. Sowing his fields and reaping them, unless an inauspicious Providence take the glitter, as Providence sometimes does, off the latter phrase,—why, there is nothing half so healthful and happy under the sun as *that!* Up betimes ere the glow of dawn begins 'to flatter the mountain-tops,' he steps out of doors to hearken, if he may, to the sweetest, natural, pleasing sounds; to mark, *if he may*—for your orthodox farmer is usually too much engrossed to *hearken* or to

mark—more inviting and eye-enamouring scenes than most men may; to breathe, *if he may*—aye, but he *must*, engrossed or no, he must, at least, breathe as fresh, as sweet, and as healthful air as can be got anywhere under the arch of heaven; and so forth he goes, and, if a good man, he will first whisper within himself a prayer of deep gratitude to the Overhead Power who has called him forth to hear, and mark, and breathe so much that is good, and fair, and satisfying!

But not only is this the farmer's prerogative when he first steps forth a-field 'o' mornings;' he has, moreover, the same sweet sounds, delightful pictures, and fragrant atmosphere about and around him all the day long. He saw the sun in the early dawn; he feels him now in the full blaze of meridian and his blood is so much the richer for it, though he may take, or, perhaps, could take no cognisance of the value of this *chemic* fact. And thus as he

goes about his fields and among the workers advising, supervising, estimating his probable gains or losses, the whole course, bent, and action of his life from day to day, from season to season, and from lease to lease, is such that, obviously, he has physical, aye, and moral opportunities of living a healthy, happy, beautiful, because natural life, which no other working member of the human family can, in the same measure or after the self-same manner, expect to enjoy.

That the farmer has many anxieties to harass and worry him there is, however, no doubt. From an economical point of view, he stands, compared with other classes, in a peculiarly *uncertain* position: his fortune is ever at the mercy of the seasons; his hopes and anxieties vary and take their complexion from the ever-varying conditions of the atmosphere. Indeed, if the farmer were physically over-sensitive to those constantly changing, natural conditions

under which his social and financial prospects contract or expand, as the case may be, he would be a short liver, and would figure more unfortunately in the vital statistics of the nation than he does at present. The farmer proper is a strong man, framed and constituted by nature to weather the blasts and buffets of hardship, as well as to enjoy the smile and sunshine of an auspicious fortune; and if haply not originally born to the manner or life of the agriculturist, no man physically weak and, therefore, incapable to endure the anxieties of the farmer, which are frequently as numerous as furrows in his fields, would undertake late in life the carrying on of an occupation which, from its very nature, is only for the hardy and vigorous. Thus it is then, from the foregoing consideration, that the farmer, in the matter of healthiness of occupation, stands head and shoulder above the rest of mankind.

HUMAN LONGEVITY.

It is often alleged that the ever-increasing demands of these exciting modern times on the physical strength of the present generation of mankind nullify, to a great extent, those peculiar social and sanitary advantages which it is supposed to enjoy over its more immediate ancestors. But while that is so far true —for the wear and tear of human life were, in all probability, never greater in the history of our race than in the latter decades of this nineteenth century—it is nevertheless a very noteworthy fact that the full physiological cycle, or term, of natural human life, which both ancient and modern writers have declared to be one hundred years, is still being attained and, in not a few instances, exceeded by many members of the human family. Even allowing for untrustworthy or unsatisfactory evi-

dence as to the precise date of birth of many of those individuals who are heard of from time to time as having achieved the distinction of living for a century or more, there can be no doubt that every year a comparatively large number of people actually attain that great and patriarchal age. In the United Kingdom, for example, it is a weekly, if not a daily occurrence, to observe in one or other of the public prints an intimation of the achievement by some person of his or her centenary of physical or vital endurance. And while in other European countries, especially in Russia, which has long been noted for its number of very old natives, these instances may, perhaps, be more numerous than in Great Britain, the testimony of their genuineness is, at all events, not more reliable than that to be found in the parochial or other registers of our country. An exception, however, must be made in the case of Russia, both because of the greater number of its

centenarian natives and of the general trustworthiness of their birth-testimony. As to the former, the official account of deaths in that empire stated that, for example, in 1839, over eleven hundred persons died whose ages, authentically certified, ranged from one hundred years to one hundred and sixty-six; while as to the latter reference, the late Baron Brunnow, a former ambassador to this country, averred that 'the bishops and priests of the Greek Church were, if possible, more careful of their registrations of births, etc., than the parochial clergy of England.' In the United States also, many extraordinary cases of human longevity have been recorded within recent times. Dr. Fitch, in his 'Treatise on Consumption,' quoted a number of well-vouched instances of longevity, where the ages given ranged from one hundred to one hundred and thirty-six. Most of the centenarians, however, were slaves or coloured natives. To be sure, the facilities for accurately recording the

ages of such persons by means of birth or baptismal registers are now, not only in this country, but in other countries, immensely superior to what they were a hundred, or fifty, or even five-and-twenty years ago. But while the evidence in the cases of those persons who claim having lived for the full physiological period of life will ever be more and more closely scrutinized, it does not necessarily follow that the number of legitimate claimants will decrease because of the application of a stricter test as to their genuineness. Still, even centenarians, in order to conform strictly to the spirit of the times in which they achieve, *nolens volens*, the distinction which great age confers on its possessors, must now perforce be exact in the matter of their credentials, otherwise they, too, will have to suffer from the all-pervading principle or dictum of the survival of the fittest!

While many remarkable instances of more or less prolonged human life, both

in ancient and modern times, but particularly in the former, will obviously occur in this connection, it seems a truth 'passing strange' in this age of stress and hurry, that declares that 'man can still attain to the same age as ever'—*i.e.*, a period of a hundred years. Of course the question of ancient and modern chronology, and how variously computed, comes in here. Theologists who have carefully investigated ancient history are all but unanimously of opinion that the chronology of the early ages was not the same as that in present use. Some have proved to the highest degree of probability that the year till the time of Abraham consisted only of three months; that it was afterwards extended to eight, and that it was not till the time of Joseph that it was made to consist of twelve months.

This assertion is, according to Hufeland, 'to a great extent otherwise confirmed by the fact that some of the

Eastern nations to this day reckon only three months to the year.' The record of the great ages of those who lived in patriarchal times has, therefore, to be considered in the view of a different computation or measurement of time than that to which we are accustomed; and thus, by applying the modern gauge, the nine hundred years of Methuselah at once shrink to about two hundred years, 'an age which,' according to the same authority just quoted, 'is not impossible, and to which some men in modern times have very nearly, if not actually approached.' Setting aside, however, any reference to the ages attained by mortals in ancient times, it has long been recognised by the most eminent scientists, naturalists and others, among whom may be mentioned the names of Fleurens, Buffon, Haller, Hufeland, and Farr, that a hundred years is the natural period of human existence. Mons. Fleurens, in his famous book,

De la Longevité Humaine et de la Quantité de Vie sur le Globe, a book which once excited the deep interest of nearly all the scientific men in Europe, gives, for instance, the following as the natural divisions and durations of the life of man: 'The first ten years of life are infancy; the second ten, the period of boyhood; from 20 to 30 is the first youth; from 30 to 40 the second youth; the first manhood is from 40 to 55, the second from 55 to 70. This period of manhood is the age of strength—the manly period of human life. From 70 to 85 is the first period of old age, and at 85 the second old age begins, and closes naturally with the hundredth year.' As so far homologating, with but one or two trifling exceptions, this scientific arrangement of the periods or degrees of human life, nothing in its way is more pointed, and at the same time more interesting than the Chinese divisions or epochs of life, which are all marked by strictly decennial periods, or

progress decimally. The age of 10 is termed by the Celestials 'the opening degree;' 20 is 'youth expired;' 30, 'strength and marriage;' 40, 'officially apt;' 50, 'error-knowing;' 60, 'cycle-closing;' 70, 'rare bird of age;' 80, 'rusty-visaged;' '90, 'delayed;' 100, 'age's extremity.' No terms of speech having reference to the natural evolutions of the periods of progressive human life could, surely, be more felicitously expressive and, also, more applicable to their subject than those thus employed by the metaphor-loving natives of the Flowery Land. Buffon, whose whole life was devoted to this and kindred subjects, said: 'The man who does not die of accidental disease lives everywhere to ninety or a hundred years.'

The total duration of life may, moreover, be estimated to a certain degree by that of the duration of an animal's growth. Man increases in height up to his sixteenth or eighteenth year,

and yet the full development in size of all the parts of his body is not completed till about the thirtieth year. The dog attains his full length in one year, and only in the second year completes its growth in bulk and size. Man, who takes thirty years to grow, lives ninety or a hundred years. The dog, which grows only two or three years at most, lives only ten or twelve years, and it is the same with most other animals. Again, the duration of life in the horse, as in all other species of animals, is proportionate to the length of time which it grows. Man, who takes fourteen or sixteen years to grow, may live six or seven times as long, that is, to ninety or a hundred years.' Fleurens, taking up this ingenious idea of Buffon's, and having the advantage of more precise physiological knowledge than had Buffon, gives the following corrected table, fully explanatory of this idea :—

					YEARS.
Man grows for	20	years,	and lives	5 times longer—	100
The camel	„ 8	„	„	„	40
The horse	„ 5	„	„	„	25
The ox	„ 4	„		lives to	15 or 20
The lion	„ 1	„		„	20
The dog	„ 2	„		„	10 or 12
The cat	„ 1½	„		„	9 or 10
The hare	„ 1	„		„	8
The guinea-pig	„ 7 months			„	5 or 6

His theory of the completion of animal growth was, of course, grounded on the union of the bones to their epiphyses. His own words on this subject are worth quoting: 'It is about fifteen 'years since I entered upon a course of 'researches into the physiological law 'of the duration of life, both in man 'and in some of the domestic animals. 'The most striking result of this labour 'is that the normal duration of the life 'of man is one century. *A hundred 'years of life is what Providence intended 'for man!* It is true that few men 'reach this great term, but yet how few 'do what is necessary to attain it.

'With our customs, our passions, our 'miseries, man does not die—he kills 'himself.' Haller, who also devoted much time to the investigation of this subject, adopted a somewhat different basis for his conclusions, although he was fully capable, as a professed physiologist, of applying to it the principles of that science. He collected together all the authenticated instances of long life: his conclusion was the extraordinary one that the 'utmost limit of human life is not within two hundred years!'

Coming to more recent authorities, the late Dr. Farr, in the Sixteenth Annual Report of the Registrar-General, said, and since has repeatedly reiterated, that 'the natural term of human life appears to be a hundred years; but out of the annual generations successively born in England and Wales, a few solitary individuals only attain that limiting age, the rest dropping off year by year as age advances,

so that the mean lifetime is at present only forty-nine years.' Few men had better opportunities for making valuable discoveries in this interesting field of inquiry than had Dr. Farr. His experience led him to the conclusion that 'a century may be considered the circuit of time in which human life goes through all the phases of its evolutions.' At each successive census with which he was connected, this conclusion was verified by some hundreds of instances of human beings attaining, and some few actually passing, this prescribed bourne of life; but these being within the United Kingdom were only, we may be certain, a mere tithe of the number of centenarians actually alive at the time on the face of the globe. Even in Scotland at the last census five years ago, there were no fewer than three hundred and sixty-four persons who were stated to be over ninety-five years of age, of whom fifty-nine were over a hundred years, and had thus actually tottered beyond that

line or limit laid down as the utmost bourne of human life. Some individuals have been known, however, to extend the duration of their lives far into their second century, but it would not be safe, without substantial data, to rely upon the genuineness of such cases. The cases of Henry Jenkins, who died in 1670 aged one hundred and sixty-nine years, and of Thomas Parr, aged one hundred and fifty-two years and nine months, are, however, often quoted as genuine instances of centenarianism extended far on to the second cycle. They may, or may not be, authentic cases of prolonged human life; but there is no question of the fact that modern times fail to produce their parallel, or indeed anything approaching to it.

* * * * *

While it may or may not be desirable that the number of persons attaining centenarian ages should be, for all

practical, every-day purposes of life, increased beyond what it is even at the present time, no natural desire rooted within the human breast should be, when it exists, more diligently nourished than that to live a long and, if possible, a useful life. Granting that a long life —whether extending near to, or even beyond, a century—is what the laws of physiology have interpreted to man as the express design of the Creator, it may be asked what could be more worthy of human effort than to preserve to its utmost ability even the clayey wrapping of the soul on which the Maker has set His sovran seal and impress? This very act, or effort, of itself betokens an innate healthiness of nature from which higher and nobler efforts—even those after a loftier life-inheritance, are certain to spring forth. With this motor at work within the mechanism of a man, depend upon it—albeit he may not, haply, be permitted to complete the full cycle of life accord-

ing to physiological measurements—he cannot surely live in vain, but must perforce contribute, even though in a most fractional degree, an appreciable quota to the sum of human progress and human happiness.

VANITY FAIR AND THE FAIR.

LIFE has often been likened to a show—a fair; 'Vanity Fair' it has indeed been called, nor is the description at all a misnomer: a Fair, truly, where motley, multitudinous assemblages of bustling, restless humanity are ever and for ever meeting and disparting, coming and going hither and thither with that bewildering suddenness that makes men marvel as children who for the first time handle a toy kaleidoscope: a Fair, busy and, in these times, boisterous enough in all conscience, in the palpable midst of which we move and shift about even now; some of us buying, some selling, and

all bartering, as it were, for price and profit, not only the petty, paltry wares of an hour, of a day, that perish in the using, but those more enduring, more vital and sublime elements appertaining to the character, to the mind, to the soul. And as the blithest creatures at a Fair are usually they who are the busiest, with hands ever going, with eyes ever watching—ready for one, ready for all—so in the great Fair of Human Life, albeit a Vanity Fair, the happiest, the soundest and the best mortals to be encountered are, invariably, they who stand not idly by, listlessly watching 'the mummers leap,' and unheeding how, but help on actively, and with whatsoever strength and relish are theirs, the business and bustle of the variegated scene in which they live and move.

It is questionable whether Autolycus gave more entertainment to the simple shepherds and shepherdesses at the country fair in Bohemia by the display

of his bright and dainty wares than by his happy-hearted *abandon* as he moved about, now here—now there, trolling that delightful song of his—

> 'Jog on, jog on the footpath way,
> And merrily hent the stile-a;
> A merry heart goes all the day
> Your sad tires in a mile-a!'

THE END.

Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row, London.

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